

A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797

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A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797

Edited by

Eric R. Dursteler



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2013

Cover illustration: Detail from Vittore Carpaccio's *Leone Andante* (1516), Sala Grimani, Palazzo Ducale.
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797 / edited by Eric R. Dursteler.

pages cm. — (Brill's companions to European history ; volume 4)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-25251-6 (hardback : acid-free paper)—ISBN 978-90-04-25252-3 (e-book) 1. Venice (Italy)—History—697–1508. 2. Venice (Italy)—History—1508–1797. I. Dursteler, Eric.

DG677.85.C57 2013

945'.31—dc23

2013015850

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual “Brill” typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 2212-7410

ISBN 978-90-04-25251-6 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-25252-3 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The genesis of this project traces back to a passing conversation I had with Julian Deahl in early 2008 about the need for a comprehensive but accessible single volume history of early modern Venice. At the time, we envisioned a volume of twenty chapters and perhaps 500 pages, to be published in early 2012. As this book's heft and publication date suggest, the project quickly took on a life of its own. While there has been the inevitable occasional bump in the road, the experience of collaborating with colleagues whose work I have long admired, and who have become friends over the course of this undertaking, has been a great pleasure for me. I am grateful to all the contributors who kindly agreed to participate in this project, despite their very busy schedules. Thanks also to Julian Deahl for his experienced and steady hand in guiding this volume to publication.

As editor, from the outset one of my primary objectives was to illustrate the broad scope and richness of Venetian studies today by bringing together an international team of the top scholars in the field. Making their work—which was composed in French, Italian and German—accessible to English language readers would not have been possible without the meticulous work of an able group of translators: Sara Russell, Emlyn Eisenbach, Catherine Framm, Dennis Meyer, Christian Kemp, and especially the incomparable Brett Auerbach-Lynn. I am also grateful to Daryl Lee for his assistance with a particularly thorny translation, and to Shane Strate for his invaluable editorial advice. Aileen Christensen, Kaitlin Berggren and Spencer Orton, all undergraduates at Brigham Young University, provided assistance in many matters both large and small. Christopher Robinson prepared the maps and Juleen Eichinger courageously brought discipline to the volume's disparate voices and styles.

The publication of this volume was made possible by a very generous grant from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation. At Brigham Young University, the Center for the Study of Europe, and the History Department provided financial and logistical assistance that was essential to the completion of the project. Special thanks are also due to Julie Radle and Don Harreld at BYU for their support.

When this project was first launched, Giuseppe Del Torre, the noted political historian of Venice at the Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, generously agreed to author the critical chapter on early modern Venetian

political history. He passed away unexpectedly in late 2009, a loss felt profoundly by his friends, family and colleagues, and by the entire community of Venetian scholars. His generosity and erudition will be missed by all; this volume is dedicated to his memory.

Eric R. Dursteler

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SURVEY OF HISTORIES OF VENICE

Eric R. Dursteler

Introduction

Why do we need another history of Venice? There is a long and abundant historiography of the city that stretches far back over a thousand years. The first medieval tendrils of this tradition have grown since the end of the Republic into a broad and complex body of scholarship. This volume both grows out of and pays homage to these forebears, and it is the hope of all contributors that, by illustrating the richness, diversity, and complexity of contemporary Venetian historiography, this volume will be a worthy addition to this admirable tradition. What follows is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the history of histories of Venice but, rather, a survey and a suggestion of a selection of the key works of both the history and historiography of Venice, with which the present volume can be placed in dialogue.

Medieval and Early Modern Histories

The roots of Venetian historiography reach back to the Middle Ages, when the first chronicles of the city on the lagoon began to appear. The oldest of these is the fragmentary *Cronaca veneziana* attributed to Giovanni Diacono and dating to the early 11th century.¹ Other notable examples include the anonymous *Historia Ducum Veneticorum* and Martin da Canale's important *Les estoires de Venise*, both dating from the 13th century, and Andrea Dandolo's celebrated *Chronicon Venetum* of 1339. Beginning around the middle of the 14th century, vernacular chronicles with a somewhat more critical tone began to appear. Up until this time, chronicles had been

¹ Gina Fasoli, "I fondamenti della storiografia veneziana," in Agostino Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi: Aspetti e problemi* (Florence, 1970), pp. 13–14.

composed primarily in Latin, with several notable French exceptions, and had been largely apologetic in character.²

The Quattrocento marked the start of significant changes in Venetian historiography, as part of wider European trends, shifting away from the chronicle tradition toward histories influenced by the rise of humanism. Florence was the leader in this, but Venice followed very closely. The result was an increased number of narrative histories based on a more critical reading of sources and slightly more objective interpretations, all composed, once again, in polished Latin prose.³

During the 15th century, several noted intellectual figures of the day tried their hand at writing the history of Venice, at the instigation of Venetian patricians and government officials. Among these were Pier Paolo Vergerio and Flavio Biondo, who produced brief or incomplete works. More significant was the work of Lorenzo de Monacis, a Venetian notary and mid-level official in the first half of the 15th century, who was one of the first to approach Venice's history in this new style. His *Oratio de edificatione e incremento urbis Venete* (1421) and *De gestis, moribus et nobilitate civitatis Venetiarum* (1421–28) were apologetic in character and exhibited an uncritical, chronicle-like credulity in the miraculous. However, in addition to regurgitating medieval chronicles, de Monacis relied on documentary sources, possibly even Greek ones, and broke with the chronological approach of the chronicle tradition in favor of a more topical treatment.⁴

From the earliest chronicles, Venice's rulers had displayed great interest in the production of historical accounts of the city. "Official" histories were most often composed by members of the city's elite who were given access to its archival records. Thus Venetian histories were written with an eye to articulating and defending the city's interests, though in this Venice differed little from other Italian cities of the period. This tradition of official historians became more formalized in the late 15th century. Marc' Antonio Coccio (1436–1506), called Sabellico, was a professor of rhetoric at Padua and had filled minor official roles. Appointed as a lecturer at the school of San Marco, in 15 short months he produced his *Rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita libri XXXIII*, published in 1487, which, as the

² Antonio Carile, "La cronachistica veneziana nei secoli XIII e XIV," in Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi: Aspetti e problemi*, p. 83.

³ Agostino Pertusi, "Gli inizi della storiografia umanistica nel Quattrocento," in Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi: Aspetti e problemi*, p. 269.

⁴ Pertusi, "Gli inizi della storiografia umanistica nel Quattrocento," pp. 278–82.

title and Sabellico's approach make clear, was deeply indebted to Livy's history of Rome. The reputation of Sabellico's history has been checkered: while not particularly innovative or insightful, and occasionally historically inaccurate, overall he was an effective writer and did a passable job of surveying the city's history. Indeed, in recognition of this, his history received official recognition by Venice following its publication. This recognition was tempered by harsh critiques among contemporaries, which carried over to subsequent generations, who have seen Sabellico as derivative, lazy, and "a second-rate humanist."⁵

Despite its limitations, Sabellico's work, and that of Bernardo Giustinian in 1492, signal the beginning of a shift in Venice from chronicle to history, which would become increasingly important in articulating a Venetian political consciousness that emphasized and was organized around the state that Venice had acquired over the past century. In many ways the Cinquecento was the "golden age of Venetian historiography."⁶ The position of official historian was formally established in 1516 when Andrea Navagero was charged to record the Republic's "constancy and invincible virtue" in the political crisis of the League of Cambrai. Navagero never finished his work, and what little he wrote was so severely criticized that in his will he ordered it burned.⁷

His successor, Pietro Bembo, inherited the position in 1530 and was similarly tasked with writing an elegant Latin history that would redound to the city's honor. The result was the *Historiae venetae, libri XII*, completed in late 1543, but only published posthumously in 1551. The work picks up where Sabellico left off and traces the difficult years from 1487 to 1513. While generally well received by contemporaries, the reputation of the *Historiae venetae* deteriorated among subsequent generations of scholars, who criticized Bembo for the chronicle-like quality of his account and his emphasis on literary style over historical method.

⁵ Eric W. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1981), pp. 84–86; William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 89–91; Pertusi, "Gli inizi della storiografia umanistica nel Quattrocento," pp. 320–30; Gino Benzoni, "Scritti storico-politici," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 4 (1996); *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 763–65.

⁶ Gaetano Cozzi, "Cultura politica e religione nella 'pubblica storiografia' veneziana del '500," *Bollettino dell'Istituto di storia della società e dello stato veneziano* 5–6 (1963–64), 219–22.

⁷ Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, p. 139.

Bembo's *Historiae* has also suffered because of comparisons with his contemporary, Marin Sanudo, whose encyclopedic *Diarii* chronicle in rich detail almost every aspect of Venetian life over a period of nearly 40 years and are among the most esteemed primary sources among modern historians. The roots of the Venetian tradition of keeping historical diaries trace back to the Codice Morosini of 1433, which proved the model for later diarists including Girolamo Priuli and, most famously, Sanudo. The triumph of the *Diarii* is ironic, since Sanudo was passed over for the position of official historian by the Senate in favor of the more influential Bembo, despite the diarist's many years of service and his obsessive compilation of an astounding range of documentary material. And in yet another blow to Sanudo, Bembo also used the former's *Diarii* in composing his *Historiae*.⁸

There is, nonetheless, much to recommend the *Historiae venetae*. Whatever his failings as a historian, Bembo was a born storyteller who narrates the extraordinarily complex political events of his day with clarity and verve and an eye for narrative detail. While not as rich as Sanudo's, Bembo's account is a product both of documentary sources extracted from Venice's archives and other private document collections, and it also benefits from the author's personal experience of living through the events he describes, as well as his contacts with some of the key figures of the day.

There followed over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries a long series of official historians, each of whom embraced with varying commitment the task of recounting the history of his day. The shift barely begun under Bembo from literary to more empirical treatments that drew on the Republic's rich archives continued. The next official historian, Paolo Paruta, was given complete access to the records in producing his *Historia vinetiana* (1605), and the position of historian was shifted from the purview of the librarian of the Marciana to the Cancelleria Secreta. Among the long line of official historians, Nicolò Contarini, who held the position in the 1620s before becoming doge in 1630, merits mention as perhaps the most penetrating. He declares that "the soul of history is the truth," and perhaps unsurprisingly, his unvarnished, wide-ranging, insider's view of Venice's history during a difficult period was considered "inopportune," and never published.⁹

⁸ Benzoni, "Scritti politico-storici," p. 766.

⁹ Gino Benzoni, "Introduzione," in Gino Benzoni and Tiziano Zanato, eds., *Storici e politici veneti del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Milan/Naples, 1982), pp. xl–xlii; Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, pp. 225–38.

With only minimal interruption, the chain of official historians continued until Pietro Garzoni's ponderous *Istoria della Repubblica di Venezia dal 1683 al 1714* (1705–16), which was the final in a three-century strand of official histories. Historians continued to be elected after Garzoni, but they produced “sterile results.” Effectively, Venice's multi-century experiment in official history ends where Garzoni stopped, 1714. In the Republic's final years there seems to have been a growing disinterest in political history; the challenge for Garzoni and his successors, as Gino Benzoni notes, was “how to glorify Venice in an age that was not glorious.” Instead legal and cultural histories, such as the volume *Storia della letteratura veneziana* (1752) by Marco Foscarini, which represents perhaps “the most credible historical monument” of the 18th century, and the publication and translation into the vernacular of works of earlier official historians, were the order of the final years of the Republic.¹⁰

At the same time that these official histories were being produced, numerous unofficial narratives of Venetian history were also compiled. Examples include Pietro Giustinian's 1560 Latin survey *Rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita*, which was solidly based in archival sources; the Bellunese Giovanni Nicolò Doglioni's 1597 *Historia venetiana*; and Alessandro Maria Vianoli's *Historia veneta* (1680–84), which is organized by the reigns of doges and notable for its pompous prose. Finally, the Venetian senator Giacomo Diedo's four-volume *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia dalla sua fondazione sino l'anno MDCCXLVII* (Venice, 1751) is deeply rooted in the myth of Venice and represents the last meaningful attempt at recounting the Republic's political history.¹¹

All of these histories, in one way or another, served to construct and solidify the much-studied myth of Venice, which is the label that contemporary scholars have adopted to describe Venice's seemingly unique civic stability and enduring republicanism. Among other characteristics, the myth depicted Venice as a stable oasis in the disorderly Italian peninsula, the anti-Florence, in a sense. Venice's order and stability were a result, according to the mythmakers, of its hierarchical society which was

¹⁰ Benzoni, “Introduzione,” xlv–xlvii; Gino Benzoni, “La storiografia e l'erudizione storico-antiquaria. Gli storici municipali,” in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 69–75; Gino Benzoni, “Pensiero storico e storiografia civile,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 5 (1986): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Settecento*, part 2, pp. 72–75, 79, 84.

¹¹ Benzoni, “Introduzione,” pp. li–lvi; Benzoni, “Pensiero storico e storiografia civile,” pp. 78–79.

marked by well-defined, impermeable social categories. Gino Benzoni's summary judgment may be most accurate: the official historiography is "a heterogenous body of disparate contributions," which are "deformed in their tone and content" and, as such, do not represent the most penetrating or suggestive output of the ruling class. This is to be found, in his opinion, in the *relazioni* of Venice's ambassadors.¹²

The Nineteenth Century

With the extinction of the Venetian Republic in 1797, its fate "passed from the hands of politicians to those of historians."¹³ The result was an expansion in both the quantity of treatments and the controversies surrounding its history. The 19th century marked the birth of a new historiography of Venice, but one which also remained deeply informed by the patterns of myth and anti-myth that had characterized the first millennium of Venetian historical writing.

The first substantial treatment of Venice's history following the Republic's fall, and the point of departure for this new historiography, was Pierre Daru's influential and controversial *L'Histoire des Républiques de Venise*, published in eight volumes in France in 1819. The work enjoyed widespread popularity and diffusion throughout Europe until the middle of the century, was translated into German and Italian, and had a profound influence on generations of scholars. Daru, who never set foot in Venice, based his history in part on a pre-existing French anti-myth of Venice literature and in part on archival records which had been transferred to Paris in 1797, including ambassadorial dispatches, senate deliberations, and the records of the Inquisitors of State, in all some 4000 documents that he meticulously catalogued. Unfortunately, as scholars quickly pointed out, a number of his sources proved to be forgeries.¹⁴

While he grew out of and responded to the French anti-myth tradition that saw Venice stereotypically as a decadent oligarchic political system,

¹² Benzoni, "Introduzione," pp. xxxiv, xlvii–xlviii.

¹³ Claudio Povo, "The Creation of Venetian Historiography," in John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State: 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), p. 491.

¹⁴ Filippo de Vivo, "Quand le passé résiste à ses historiographies: Venise et le XVII^e siècle," *Les Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 28–30 (2002), 223–34; Xavier Tabet, "Pierre Daru et la vision historique et politique du passé vénitien," in Christian del Vento and Xavier Tabet, eds., *Le mythe de Venise au XIX^e siècle: Débats historiographiques et représentations littéraires* (Caen, 2006), pp. 29–30.

Daru developed a more nuanced, innovative, and historically rooted interpretation of Venetian power. Influenced by Montesquieu and Gibbon's work on the fall of Rome, he attributed Venice's decline both to structural and moral failings. He pointed to "profound contradictions" that developed as the city's institutions proved inadequate in dealing with its territorial expansion, the inability to reconcile conflicts within the ruling elite, and the failure to adapt to the changing European political landscape. Venice's desperate policy of neutrality made it "soft and effeminate" and thus easy prey to Napoleon. Daru pulled few punches: he saw in Venice "a sordid saga of imperial hubris and moral collapse," evidenced in the nefarious inner workings of the Council of Ten and Inquisition of State, whose existence was a testament to its "evil constitution." Daru's polemics marked "the point of departure" for Venetian historiography in the 19th century, and no work had a greater impact: all historians who followed were marked by his interpretation.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, though Daru considered his work the "fruit of love and admiration for the Serenissima," the *Histoire* garnered a profoundly negative reception in Venice; indeed, Mario Infelise has described it as "a punch in the stomach."¹⁶ It represented the first historical attempt to identify the causes that led to the collapse of Venice at a time when many of the protagonists were still alive and when the Venetians themselves had not begun to probe seriously their own history or come to grips with the snuffing out of the Republic. The outrage at Daru's treatment inspired a renewed interest among Venetians in their own history and gave rise to a variety of responses. One of the first of these came in 1828 when, after an extended correspondence in which he attempted to convince Daru to correct the many errors in his *Histoire*, the patrician politician and scholar Giandomenico Ermolao II Tiepolo published his two-volume *Discorsi sulla storia veneta, cioè rettificazioni di alcuni equivoci riscontrati nella storia di Venezia del signor Daru*. Less history than polemic, Tiepolo attempted to restore the honor and glory of the Republic and its aristocracy

¹⁵ Mario Infelise, "Venezia e il suo passato. Storie miti 'fole,'" in Mario Isneghi and Stuart Woolf, eds., *Storia di Venezia: L'Ottocento e il Novecento* (Rome, 2002), pp. 969–70; Christian Del Vento, "Foscolo, Daru et le mythe de la 'Venise démocratique,'" in Christian Del Vento and Xavier Tabet, eds., *Le mythe de Venise au XIX siècle: Débats historiographiques et représentations littéraires* (Caen, 2006), p. 54; Tabet, "Pierre Daru et la vision historique et politique du passé vénitien," pp. 27–30; John Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 90–91.

¹⁶ Gino Benzoni, "La Storiografia," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 6 (1986): *Dall'età Napoleonica alla prima guerra mondiale*, p. 602; Infelise, "Venezia e il suo passato," p. 970.

by addressing systematically what he perceived as Daru's most egregious errors of interpretation and documentation.¹⁷

Ugo Foscolo's *Storia di Venezia* was also strongly influenced by Daru, though, in contrast to other writers who were intent on deconstructing and critiquing the book, Foscolo hewed quite closely to many aspects of Daru's vision of Venice. For example, like Daru, he attributes the Republic's decline to external forces, including the Ottoman expansion and the discovery of America. By focusing on external forces, Foscolo underlines the continuing viability of the Venetian government, arguing that it only collapsed in the unique and unprecedented maelstrom of the French Revolution, which upended its otherwise solid foundations. Foscolo's originality lies in his placement of Venice into the broader narrative of Italian history: he sees the Republic's social and political structures not as exceptional but, rather, as fitting firmly within the context of the history of the peninsula. As such, Foscolo represents an early example of the move to incorporate Venice into the Italian fold, as part of the project to manufacture an Italian national history.¹⁸

The intersection of a growing nationalist agenda and Daru's misrepresentations were also the impetus behind the century's most comprehensive history of Venice, Samuele Romanin's acclaimed ten-volume *Storia documentata di Venezia*, published between 1853 and 1861. Widely acclaimed at its publication and reprinted numerous times, it has been described as "the most fortunate history of Venice."¹⁹ In many ways, Romanin was an unlikely candidate to rescue his adopted city's historical reputation. A Jew born in Trieste, he only moved to Venice in 1821, where he worked initially on an Italian translation of Hammer-Purgstall's monumental history of the Ottoman Empire.²⁰ The heady events of 1848 were accompanied by a revival of interest in Venetian history and marked the beginning of a new stage in Romanin's career. One of the first acts of the new government was to encourage the teaching of the Venetian past inserted into the broader flow of Italian history. In response, Romanin began a popular course on Venetian history at the Ateneo Veneto, was given unfettered access to the

¹⁷ Massimo Canella, "Appunti e spunti sulla storiografia veneziana dell'800," *Archivio veneto* 106 (1976), 81–82; Povolo, "The Creation of Venetian Historiography," p. 498; Infelise, "Venezia e il suo passato," pp. 970, 972.

¹⁸ Del Vento, "Foscolo, Daru et le mythe de la 'Venise démocratique,'" pp. 55–58; John Lindon, "Foscolo, Daru e la Storia di Venezia," *Revue des études italiennes* 27 (1981), 8–39.

¹⁹ Infelise, "Venezia e il suo passato," pp. 975–76.

²⁰ Gino Benzoni, "Dal rimpianto alla ricostruzione geografica," in Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, eds., *Venezia e l'Austria* (Venice, 1999), pp. 365–66.

city's archives, and in short order received several important academic appointments.²¹

Romanin's expansive survey of Venetian history was shaped by the political and historiographical climate of his day. In terms of the latter, Romanin was committed to providing a historical response to all the "insults" that were being rained down "on unhappy and trampled Venice." His version of Venice's past was intended to be an "admonition to the foreigner to judge better this venerable city" and an "incitement to Venetians to arise from their sloth" and rediscover the "past glories" of their history. As for the former, Romanin's focus on constitutional, legal, institutional, and political history was part of a larger program to recover the historical roots of the nascent Italian nation-state of the Risorgimento, in which Venice came to occupy a position of "new and refulgent prestige."²²

Romanin's sympathetic historical defense of Venice resurrected many of the elements of the old, positive myth of Venice. He celebrated the Republic's justice and moderation, and its "defining attributes... peace and concord." Romanin's mythmaking was even more accentuated in a subsequent work, *Lezioni di storia veneta*, in which he assigned responsibility for any disorder in Venice not to the failings of its ruling class but to its over-generosity in granting rights to its subjects.²³ Nonetheless, the *Storia documentata* represents an impressive survey of Venetian history from its founding to Romanin's day; it is often elegantly composed and is deeply rooted in the archival record.²⁴ As his title indicates, Romanin was a "sincere believer" in the "religion of the document." Archival sources reveal the real functioning of the "the machine of government," which had often been misrepresented because of archival ignorance. Thus, the pages of his volumes are full of lengthy excerpts of documents which he is often content to let speak for themselves, with minimal analysis. "The robust shoulders" of Romanin's *Storia* opened up a panorama of research possibilities to subsequent generations of scholars of Venice, and in recognition

²¹ Benzoni, "Dal rimpianto alla ricostruzione geografica," pp. 366, 367; Infelise, "Venezia e il suo passato," pp. 975–76.

²² Christophe Musitelli, "Deux regards sur le mythe politique à la chute de la république: l'*Histoire de Venise* de Daru et la *Storia della costituzione democratica* de Foscolo," in Alessandro Fontana and Georges Saro, eds., *Venise 1297–1797: La République des castors* (Fontenay-Saint-Cloud, 1997), pp. 198–201; Infelise, "Venezia e il suo passato," pp. 975–76; Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, pp. 96–97.

²³ Povolo, "The Creation of Venetian Historiography," p. 503.

²⁴ Benzoni, "La Storiografia," p. 605.

of his contribution, he was memorialized with a bust by Augusto Benvenuti in the Palazzo Ducale.²⁵

The “fetishism” of the document was similarly manifest in the publication of numerous collections of primary sources over the course of the 19th century. The first of 15 volumes of Eugenio Albèri’s famed *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato* was published in 1839, and was supplemented by several subsequent collections, including Niccolò Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet’s set of 17th-century reports. The second half of the century witnessed the publication of other documentary sources, including Sanudo’s *Diarii*, the Rome dispatches of Paruta, and Predelli’s *Commemoriali*.²⁶

An enduring fascination with Venice and a growing awareness of its archival riches drew many non-Italian scholars to the city over the course of the century. The great Leopold von Ranke was among the first researchers to gain access to the archives in 1828. Others followed, including Armand Baschet, who in 1869 was tasked by the French foreign ministry to collect and copy manuscripts related to French history and who joined the chorus against his countryman Daru, accusing him of blatant falsification of documents.²⁷ The Englishman Rawdon Brown was commissioned in 1862 to canvas the “vast magazine of universal history” of the Frari for documents pertaining to British history. His labors were collected in the monumental six volumes and more than 5000 pages of the *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, published over the course of the next 20 years.²⁸ This work was taken up by another English gentleman scholar, Horatio Brown (no relation), who spent four decades in Venice working on the next five volumes of the *Calendar*. He also published a very conventional work, *Venice: An Historical Sketch of the Republic* (London, 1895), which focuses primarily on the political narrative.

Returning to Venice, alongside Romanin, the other chief figure of 19th-century Venetian historiography was Pompeo Molmenti, who has been described as “the standard-bearer of the army of historians seeking

²⁵ Benzoni, “Dal rimpianto alla ricostruzione geografica,” pp. 365, 368–69.

²⁶ Gino Benzoni, “Ranké’s Favorite Source: The Venetian *Relazioni*: Impressions with Allusions to Later Historiography,” in Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse, 1990), pp. 49–50; Benzoni, “La Storiografia,” p. 609.

²⁷ De Vivo, “Quand le passé résiste à ses historiographies: Venise et le XVII^e siècle,” p. 224; Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, pp. 95, 202 n. 15.

²⁸ Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, pp. 75, 80–81; Paul Kaufman, “Rawdon Brown and his Adventures in Venetian Archives,” *English Miscellany* 18 (1967), 288–89.

to celebrate the glories of the ancient Republic.”²⁹ As did Romanin, Molmenti took up historiographical arms to defend Venice from the anti-myth of Daru and others. He denounced “gullible, deceived, or mercenary historians” who “paid scant attention to historical accuracy,” and he welcomed the more accurate image of the Republic contained in the “new historiography” of Venice that was then taking hold. Molmenti was a politician as well as a scholar, and a clear nationalist undertone informs his work: he saw the end of foreign domination and the unification of Italy as essential steps in this historiographical paradigm shift. These made possible a more rigorous, historicist, archival treatment of Venice’s past and liberated it from “the legend of terror and mystery, which had surrounded the Republic.” As David Laven has argued, Molmenti illustrates how the Risorgimento “permitted a radical reconceptualization” of Venice in the new national context. In place of Venice as the embodiment of Italian decadence, Venice now could be portrayed as effectively resisting foreign domination, which became an essential part of the new “national tale of resurgence,” and unification.³⁰

Molmenti’s *magnum opus*, the *Storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della repubblica* (1880), published when he was barely 27 years old, was written in response to an 1877 competition with a prize of 3000 lire, sponsored by the Istituto Veneto, on the theme of the private life of Venice. The book has been described as “one of the most successful works in the endless panorama of the historiography of Venice” and “the monument of an age.”³¹ It was also that most rare of historical works that was immediately well received by both scholars and the general public.

Initially published in a single volume, it was divided into three parts: “Le origini” of the city’s medieval foundations, “Lo splendore” of the Renaissance, and “Il decadimento” of the Republic’s final centuries. Similar to other treatments, Molmenti’s familiar, “organic model of Venetian history” sketches Venice’s past along an arc of rise, golden age, and decline; and he situates the beginning of the end in Venice’s expansion into

²⁹ Povoletto, “The Creation of Venetian Historiography,” p. 505; Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, p. 97.

³⁰ David Laven, “Venice 1848–1915: The Venetian Sense of the Past and the Creation of the Italian Nation,” in William Whyte and Oliver Zimmer, eds., *Nationalism and the Shaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848–1914* (Houndmills, 2011), pp. 66–67.

³¹ Giandomenico Romanelli, “Venezia nella vita privata. L’ideologia della venezianità,” in Giuseppe Pavanetto, ed., *L’enigma della modernità. Venezia nell’età di Pompeo Molmenti* (Venice, 2006), pp. 19, 24.

the *terraferma*.³² His history was not purely derivative; on the contrary, it was innovative in moving beyond the traditional 19th-century narratives of politics, war, and institutions and in approaching Venice from a sociological and cultural perspective.³³ Thus, Molmenti treats a broad spectrum of themes, including costume, festival, furniture, jewelry, sanitation, housing, industry, family, and economy. To penetrate the everyday life of Venetians, he was also original in his use of sources not widely accessed by scholars of his day, including notarial and private archives, as well as art and material culture, which he considered of equal value to manuscript and printed documents. Molmenti was also groundbreaking in his use of photography to provide a visual backdrop to his study: beginning with the 1905 edition, which Molmenti considered an entirely “new work,” given his extensive revisions and expansion, he introduced a rich array of illustrations, “a kaleidoscope” to accompany the documentary appendices present since the first edition. Molmenti was never satisfied with his youthful effort, and he tinkered incessantly with the *Storia*, rewriting and adding layer upon layer of new evidence and insights. A constant companion throughout its author’s life (he corrected proofs of the final edition on his deathbed), it went through seven editions over 50 years, as well as translations into German, French, Croatian, and English.³⁴

Twentieth-Century Transformations

Molmenti’s *Storia* both bridged and loomed over turn-of-the-century Venetian scholarship, and it remained the most well known and respected work on the city’s history, in Italy and abroad, up to the Second World War. During this period, foreign scholars’ fascination with Venice also continued apace. In France, Charles Diehl’s 1915 *Une république patricienne: Venise* was the most significant addition. While primarily a political narrative, Diehl is clearly influenced by Molmenti’s treatment of the life and culture of Venice; he is “post-romantic” and very traditional in his

³² John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano, “Introduction,” in John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano, eds, *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 13–14; Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth* (Baltimore, 1999), pp. 100–01.

³³ Pompeo Molmenti, *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della repubblica* (Turin, 1880), p. ix.

³⁴ Margaret Plant, *Venice Fragile City 1797–1997* (New Haven, 2002), p. 190; Giandomenico Romanelli, “Venezia nella vita privata,” pp. 21–23.

depiction of Venice during its final centuries as a place of “necrophile clichés of decadence,” “the city of carnival . . . and of dissolute pleasures.”³⁵

The most substantial and influential new history of Venice in this period, and the most noteworthy in the parade of foreign histories of the Republic, was the “robust” *Geschichte von Venedig* of the Austrian archivist and historian Heinrich Kretschmayr. The first volume was published in 1905, the second was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I and did not appear until 1920, and the third not until 1933, following the destruction of his notes in a 1927 fire. Attempts to publish an Italian translation were equally star-crossed: both Kretschmayr and his Italian translator died in 1939, the project was put on hold during World War II, then completed in the post-war years, but inexplicably never published.³⁶

Kretschmayr's treatment of Venice is in many ways an outgrowth of the 19th-century historiographical tradition. He surveys all of the major figures and the key political, military and diplomatic events of Venetian history chronologically. However, he intersperses this with discussions of religion, commerce, industry, administrative structure, and—somewhat unexpectedly—lengthy passages on literature and art. Throughout, Kretschmayr carefully situates Venice within a broader context of European and Mediterranean developments. The volumes are deeply rooted in archival research in Venice, as well as in Venetian documents in Vienna, which were only repatriated after World War I. He also thoughtfully engages, and at times challenges, the flourishing scholarship on Venice, particularly in detailed surveys of both primary and secondary literature that are appended to each volume. Kretschmayr's *Geschichte* was widely praised among scholars in Austria, Italy, and beyond as a “milestone,” a “monumental” work of scholarship, and the definitive synthesis of Venetian history of its day.

In the same way that Kretschmayr's work was caught up in the cataclysmic events of the first half of the 20th century, these also left their mark on Venetian historiography. Xavier Tabet has argued that the process of “Italianizing Venice and its past” begun during the Risorgimento, was completed during World War I when much of Venice's former *terraferma* state became the primary battleground of the Italian war effort, and

³⁵ Xavier Tabet, “La ‘troisième Venise’: un mythe italien de l'entre-deux-guerres,” *Laboratoire italien: politique et société* 6 (2005), 138; Tabet, “Pierre Daru et la vision historique et politique du passé vénitien,” pp. 41–43.

³⁶ Mario de Biasi, “La ‘Storia di Venezia’ del Kretschmayr e la sua traduzione in italiano,” *Archivio veneto* 139 (1992), 99–110.

"the glory of the ancient republic" became a cornerstone in the "Italian nationalist cause." This continued during the fascist era, which saw an even tighter linkage of Venetian culture and history to the regime's political and cultural program. One figure of note was the unabashedly nationalist historian Bruno Dudan, scion of a Dalmatian noble family, whose 1938 work *Il dominio veneziano di levante*, published by the Istituto nazionale di cultura fascista, emphasized "the power of Venetian *Romanità*." For Dudan and others in fascist Italy, the Venetian past represented both a model and "a justification for its colonial ambitions" in the Balkans.³⁷

In contrast to the "imperialist historiography" of much fascist-era scholarship, the work of the archivist, historian, and socialist politician, Roberto Cessi—the most notable Italian scholar of Venice in the inter- and post-war years—adhered to a rigorously historicist methodology that rejected all grand, overarching historiographical philosophies and ideologies.³⁸ Cessi, along with the great economic historian of Venice Gino Luzzatto, looms over the post-Molmenti period: His scholarly output over a lengthy life included dozens of books and hundreds of articles spanning the period from the late Roman empire to the resistance movement of his own day. In addition, Cessi was active in a variety of historical publications and institutions and was known for his numerous exacting reviews.³⁹ His most important work was the *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, published in two volumes in 1944 and 1946 (and in a second, expanded edition in 1968). As Cessi phrased it, the *Storia* represented the "the fruit" of a life spent "in direct contact with an inexhaustible patrimony" contained in the Frari archive, where his career began in 1908.⁴⁰

The book is rich with detail and suggestive in its interpretations and analysis. It is also, like all of Cessi's work, written in a style which is not easily penetrated and is intended more for the scholar than the popular reading public. Indeed, this was at the core of Cessi's historical "temperament." He was a scholar's scholar, strongly opposed to works that

³⁷ Tabet, "La 'troisième Venise,'" pp. 139, 146, 150, 167; Filippo Maria Paladini, "Velleità e capitolazione della propaganda talassocratica veneziana (1935–1945)," *Venetica* 6 (2002), 149.

³⁸ Tabet, "La 'troisième Venise,'" pp. 169–70; Ernesto Sestan, "Roberto Cessi storico," *Archivio veneto* 121–122 (1969), 232.

³⁹ Paolo Preto, "Cessi, Roberto," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 24 (Rome, 1980), pp. 271; Sestan, "Roberto Cessi," pp. 221, 232.

⁴⁰ Federico Seneca, "L'opera storica di Roberto Cessi," *Archivio storico italiano* 128 (1970), 43.

were adapted to the tastes of the “general public.”⁴¹ These factors, plus the dramatic and rapid changes in Venetian historiography in the second half of the 20th century, perhaps help explain why Cessi’s *Storia*, though certainly influential, in comparison with its predecessors had less of an enduring impact. Though not on the same scale as a Daru, Romanin, or Molmenti, Cessi’s *Storia* in many ways represents the last of a vanishing breed, namely, the single-authored, comprehensive history of Venice.

The post-war years brought important developments that moved Venetian history in an expanding number of directions. There was a surge in the number of professional historians and other scholars who undertook the study of the city, in ever narrower and more specialized ways. Somewhat paradoxically, as scholars collectively came to know more about Venice’s past, no individual historian had the confidence to produce a master narrative on the scale of earlier generations. Rather, as the lions of the past were replaced by a more numerous and specialized group of scholars, the writing of Venetian history was collectivized. No longer could a single scholar pretend to treat alone the increasingly rich fabric of the lagoon. Now teams of scholars, research institutions, and public and private funds were necessary to confront the enormity of the endeavor. The result has been works that take a much more varied and richer approach to Venice and that evidence notable changes within the broader historical profession—this in turn has profoundly influenced our knowledge and understanding of Venice. Another result is that no history of Venice, single or collectively authored, has approached the reputation and influence of the great works of the previous 200 years.⁴²

The first significant attempt at a collaborative history of Venice took shape under the aegis of the Centro internazionale delle arti del costume at Palazzo Grassi, with Roberto Cessi as the project director. The series was envisioned as a return to the expansive histories of Venice which had been in vogue in the 19th century but which had been supplanted by scholars with more narrow and specialized focuses. The ambitious plans called for a “monumental history” comprising 16 volumes, written by teams of specialists; ultimately, however, only the first two volumes were published, covering Venice’s prehistory up to the fourth crusade. These two volumes attempt to bridge academic and popular historical approaches

⁴¹ Seneca, “L’opera storica di Roberto Cessi,” p. 44; Sestan, “Roberto Cessi,” p. 232.

⁴² James S. Grubb, “When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography,” *Journal of Modern History* 58 (1986), 82–83.

and evidence a rather traditionalist restatement of Venice's past, untouched by the major transformations that the historical profession was undergoing, particularly in neighboring France. More successful was Gino Luzzatto's essential work, *Storia economica di Venezia dall'XI al XVI secolo*, which was supposed to appear in the series but was instead published separately in 1961. Roberto Cessi's contribution to the series, *Venezia nel Duecento: tra orient e occidente*, was finally published posthumously in 1985 but by then was quite dated.⁴³

Another multi-authored collection, the *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, had its beginnings in an annual series of lectures devoted to particular centuries of Venetian history that were presented at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini from 1955 to 1965. This institution, located on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, had been founded in 1951 by Count Vittorio Cini in memory of his son and quickly became the hub of post-war Venetian historiography. The lectures were first published separately in nine volumes (1955–65) before being repackaged in three volumes in 1979. Organized chronologically, the collection provides a broad, somewhat scattered overview, which is not surprising since the lectures were not constructed with an eye toward a systematic or comprehensive overview of Venetian history. Still, the pieces are written by some of the chief historians of the day—Kristeller, Braudel, Luzzatto, Chabod—and many provide useful examinations informed by the most recent scholarship.⁴⁴

The Cini was also a key player in the first comprehensive effort at a collaborative history of Venice, the “great editorial undertaking” of the *Storia della cultura veneta*.⁴⁵ In ten volumes published over a decade from 1976 to 1986, an impressive team comprising the most important scholars in the field surveyed topics from Venice's origins up to World War I. The project was funded by the Istituto federale delle casse di risparmio delle Venezie in commemoration of its fiftieth anniversary, and this undoubtedly influenced its philosophical, perhaps better, ideological, foundations. The series' general editors—Gianfranco Folena, Manlio Pastore Stocchi, and Girolamo Arnaldi—envisioned an approach that traced not the traditional political narrative of Venetian expansion and domination of the

⁴³ Alberto Tenenti, “Une histoire monumentale de Venise,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 15 (1960), 1026; Wladimiro Dorigo, “Leggendo il primo volume della nuova ‘Storia di Venezia,’” *Studi veneziani* 33 (1997), 15.

⁴⁴ See Vittore Branca, ed., *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 3 vols (Florence, 1979).

⁴⁵ Sergio Bertelli, “Appunti sulla storiografia italiana per l'età moderna (1985–1995),” *Archivio storico italiano* 156 (1998), 105.

terraferma but, rather, “conquests of a cultural character.” The objective was to identify (imagine?) “the traces . . . the emergence and the affirmation” over the centuries of a shared Venetian cultural identity that characterized and united the Veneto region and the *Dominante*.⁴⁶

The multiple, massive volumes of the series address a broad range of topics including literature, historiography, music, language, travel, education, theater, geography, science, medicine, technology, printing, and *mentalités*. In a decision that elicited fierce criticism at the time, and seems dubious in retrospect, the editors chose to ignore art entirely because of the “exorbitant” scope of the field, and the “autonomy” of its historiographical tradition.⁴⁷ The series’ notion of culture is very much in the traditional, high cultural vein: culture in an anthropological sense makes no appearance, nor does any significant discussion of popular culture, despite the growing historiographical prominence of both in the 1970s and 1980s. Social history receives some minimal attention, though primarily through the prism of important texts and figures. Religion is only minimally treated in the context of the teaching of theology, and in several chapters on the course of the reformation in the region, which seem frankly out of place. Women and gender are entirely ignored, which is not surprising given the arrested state of Venetian gender history in this period. One of the strengths of the series is its tight incorporation of the *terraferma* into Venetian history, a result of the burgeoning of studies on the mainland state. This is also one of the series’ weaknesses, as Venice’s extensive maritime empire, the *stato da mar*, is almost entirely overlooked. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the series was rightly hailed as a major contribution, and its rich and inventive volumes remain an influential source for scholars today.

The Fondazione Cini, together with the Regione Veneto, once again provided the impetus and organizational focus for another massive, collaborative historical undertaking, the *Storia di Venezia*, coordinated by Vittore Branca, Gaetano Cozzi, Ugo Tucci, and Gino Benzoni and published by the Istituto della enciclopedia italiana Treccani over the course of a decade, from 1992 to 2002.⁴⁸ The series comprises 14 large volumes and more than 8000 pages: 11 volumes trace Venice’s history from its origins

⁴⁶ Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, “Nota,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 6 (1986): *Dall’età napoleonica alla prima guerra mondiale*, p. xv.

⁴⁷ Girolamo Arnaldi, “Idee per una introduzione,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 1: (1976): *Dalle origini al Trecento*, pp. xv–xvii.

⁴⁸ Bertelli, “Appunti sulla storiografia italiana per l’età moderna,” p. 105.

to the post-World War II decades, while the remainder provide a thematic treatment of Venetian art in two volumes and a rather unusual, though fascinating, volume dedicated to the relationship of Venice to the sea.⁴⁹

Modeled on Treccani's *Storia di Milano* (1953–62), the project had its genesis in a series of conversations involving the most influential Italian scholars of Venice of the day. While acknowledging the long chain of histories of Venice that preceded it, the organizers of the massive undertaking acknowledged that no definitive history of Venice could exist and that “every age and cultural climate feels the need to grapple with the lagoon’s history, to write, and rewrite it again.” Their objective, then, was to “surpass” all previous histories of Venice in scale and historiographical currency and produce the definitive history of Venice for this generation. This was to be accomplished by an in-depth tracing of the trajectory of Venetian history, from its origins to the present day, focusing not just on the city itself, but placed within the broader context of its relationship to the landed and maritime components of its state. More than just a political narrative, the Treccani series also provides up-to-date treatments of society, gender, religion, economy, institutional history, law, trade, environment, industry, popular culture, and demography. One of the series’ real strengths is its treatment of Venice’s maritime empire within its Mediterranean context. While certainly not as rich in its treatment of culture as the *Storia della cultura veneta*, the *Storia di Venezia* does devote two full volumes to art.⁵⁰

Parallel to these post-war developments in Italian historiography, beginning in the 1960s Venice was, in a sense, rediscovered by a new wave of non-Italian scholars. This discovery was accompanied by “an astonishing expansion” in studies of the city and its state, particularly during the early modern period, and arose in response to both historiographical and institutional developments that attracted renewed attention to the lagoon.⁵¹ In Britain this growing interest saw the publication of several modest but influential collections of essays, including Brian Pullan’s *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* in 1968, and J. R. Hale’s *Renaissance Venice* in 1973, which remains a standard point

⁴⁹ On this unusual volume, see Achille Olivieri, “‘Il mare,’ primo volume tematico della ‘Storia di Venezia’: letture, prospettive,” *Studi veneziani* 28 (1995), 179–90.

⁵⁰ Vittore Branca, et al., “Prefazione,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 1 (1992): *Origini-Età ducale*, ed. Lellia Cracco Ruggini, Massimiliano Pavan, Giorgio Cracco, and Gherardo Ortalli, pp. xiii–xvii.

⁵¹ N. S. Davidson, “‘In Dialogue with the Past’: Venetian Research from the 1960s to the 1990s,” *Bulletin of the Society for Renaissance Studies* 15 (1997), 13–15.

of departure for Venetian scholars. The popular fascination with Venice was satiated by John Julius Norwich's *A History of Venice*, a fine enough treatment of Venetian history in the political and diplomatic narrative tradition. In France, while not a history of Venice per se, the centrality of the city in one of the great works of 20th-century historiography, Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, first published in 1949 with a revised edition in 1966, certainly contributed to this resurgence.

In the United States, the father of modern American scholarship on Venice, Frederic C. Lane, published *Venice: A Maritime Republic* in 1973, the first significant attempt at a scholarly, comprehensive history of Venice in English since the turn of the century. This was the culmination of a lifetime of study, and while following a loose chronological format and providing a functional political narrative, the book takes numerous, lengthy detours into Lane's areas of research—shipping, naval warfare, commerce, and industry. As the title suggests, the focus is heavily directed toward maritime Venice, often to the exclusion of the *terraferma*. While the book was greeted with almost universal acclaim upon its publication, an unusually scathing review penned by two well-respected historians at the University of Chicago, Eric Cochrane and Julius Kirshner, challenged everything from Lane's use of dated historical interpretations to more petty grammatical errors. Most damning, however, was their charge that Lane had dusted off many of the old myths of Venice as an oasis of equality and political consensus in the service of an equally mythical view of the modern American incarnation of these republican ideals, what Renzo Pecchioli called elsewhere the "ideologia americana."⁵² Despite this fierce, but isolated, critique, to which Lane never responded, the book retains ongoing currency among scholars and is widely used in university courses, though it is now dated in terms of the significant body of scholarship on Venice that has been produced in the intervening decades.

Returning to Italy, another, more modest collaboration is the three volumes on Venice in the UTET *Storia d'Italia* series. Giorgio Cracco's *Un 'altro mondo': Venezia nel medioevo dal secolo XI al secolo XIV* was published in 1986, as was Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton's *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*, which covers the period from the war of

⁵² Eric Cochrane and Julius Kirshner, "Deconstructing Lane's Venice," *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975), 321–34; Renzo Pecchioli, *Dal 'mito' di Venezia all'ideologia americana: itinerari e modelli della storiografia sul repubblicanesimo dell'età moderna* (Venice, 1983), pp. 161–62.

Chioggia to 1517. A second volume with the same name, which added Giovanni Scarabello as a third co-author, was published in 1992 and covers the final centuries of the Republic. Cozzi, one of the most influential historians of Venice in the second half of the 20th century, had originally intended to be the sole author of both books, but illness forced him to bring on his young collaborators. Nonetheless, his influence is evident throughout in the interweaving of politics, religion, intellectual history, and culture, themes that were at the center of his research for decades. Indeed, among his many monographic works, the volumes represent Cozzi's most complete synthetic treatment of Venetian history.⁵³

Histories of Venice Today

The past two decades have seen a continued, though comparatively modest, production of histories of Venice. This has been primarily in the form of single-volume works, written with an eye toward a popular, rather than scholarly, reading public. A list of these, by no means exhaustive, includes Gary Will's *Venice, Lion City: The Religion of Empire*, Elizabeth Horodowich's *A Brief History of Venice*, Christian Bec, *Histoire de Venise*, Jean-Claude Hocquet, *Venise: Guide culturel d'une ville d'art de la Renaissance à nos jours*, Gherardo Ortalli and Giovanni Scarabello's *Breve storia di Venezia*, and Alvisè Zorzi's *La repubblica del leone: Storia di Venezia*.

Several more substantial works of history deserve mention. J. R. Hale's seminal 1973 collection, *Renaissance Venice*, was revisited a quarter century after its publication when Venetian scholars from Europe and the United States convened to examine the evolution of Venetian studies on the cusp of the 21st century. A selection of the papers presented at this gathering were gathered in John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano's important collection, *Venice Reconsidered*. The volume's essays suggest some of the directions that Venetian scholarship has taken in recent years, introducing new trends such as gender, society, and culture while overlooking others such as religion, despite the important advances of the past 30 years in this field. Despite certain lacunae, the volume illustrates the dynamism and diversity of Venetian studies today. It also posits a vision of a Venetian society that, instead of being fixed and closed, was fluid and permeable and suggests that the city may have maintained relative peace

⁵³ Davidson, "In Dialogue with the Past," pp. 13–14.

and order not because it was a tightly defined, hierarchical society, as the hoary myth suggests, but, rather, because of the malleability and adaptability of its social boundaries.

The most compelling recent history of Venice is the eminent French cultural and environmental historian Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan's *Venise triomphante: les horizons d'un mythe*, published in France in 1997 and in a wonderful English translation in 2002. Crouzet-Pavan approaches Venetian history with great insight and innovation through an examination of the determining influence of Venice's physical setting on its history. She describes the way the land was drained, the water tamed, and the physical setting manipulated and transformed; and she argues that the unique challenge of building a city on water produced early on a need for collective effort, which ultimately gave rise to the highly centralized, unusually stable structures of the Venetian state. Unfortunately the narrative peters out in the first decades of the 16th century, thus neglecting Venice's adaptation to the changing early modern world and the eventual end of the Republic. More comprehensive is Joanne Ferraro's recent *Venice: History of the Floating City*, which surveys Venice from its founding to the present with strong attention to society, environment, gender, and religion. The book also excels at placing the city within a broad web of connections stretching to Europe, the Mediterranean and beyond.

Conclusion

As this rapid overview has shown, there is a long, rich, and variegated tradition of histories of Venice. One could reasonably ask whether there is a need, indeed if there is even room on the shelf, for another such history. It has been suggested that every generation feels the need to grapple with and rewrite the lagoon's history, which may well be true. However, what the contributors to the present volume hope to do is not so much rewrite Venice's history for a new generation as provide an accessible, single-volume survey of Venetian history from 1400 to the fall of the Republic that is informed by the most current scholarship. The intent is to provide a snapshot that will serve as a scholarly point-of-entry into the present state of Venetian studies for students, non-Venetianist scholars, non-specialists, and others. This may serve research and teaching purposes or may simply satisfy historical curiosity. To this end, each chapter provides a historical overview of its topic, a sense of the current historio-

graphical discourse surrounding it, as well as an indication of both the key works in the field and potential future directions of research.

The contributors to this volume are among the most important scholars working on Venice today, and they embody the international scope of scholarship on Venice, as well as its ongoing richness and vibrancy. As the breadth of chapters suggest, Venetian studies today is a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary field. While rooted in and respectful of the primarily political foundations of the first generations of Venetian historical scholarship of Daru, Romanin, Molmenti, and Cessi, scholars today have largely moved beyond old questions regarding the myth or anti-myth of Venice, or the city's rise and decline. Instead, they are asking a whole new series of social, cultural, religious, political, and gender-related questions of a greatly expanded body of sources. In addition, they have embraced a more expansive vision of the city that situates it within ever-widening circles of lagunar, Italian, maritime, European, and Mediterranean contacts.⁵⁴ This historiographical shift has in turn breathed new life into and attracted many new students to researching Venice, who see in it an ideal forum for transcultural questions that push beyond traditional historical, historiographical, and disciplinary boundaries. At this exciting juncture in the centuries-long tradition of Venetian scholarship, the time seems ripe for a volume of this sort.

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⁵⁴ Martin and Romano, "Introduction"; Elizabeth Horodowich, "The New Venice: Historians and Historiography in the 21st Century Lagoon," *History Compass* 2 (2004), 1–27; Davidson, "In Dialogue with the Past," pp. 13–24.

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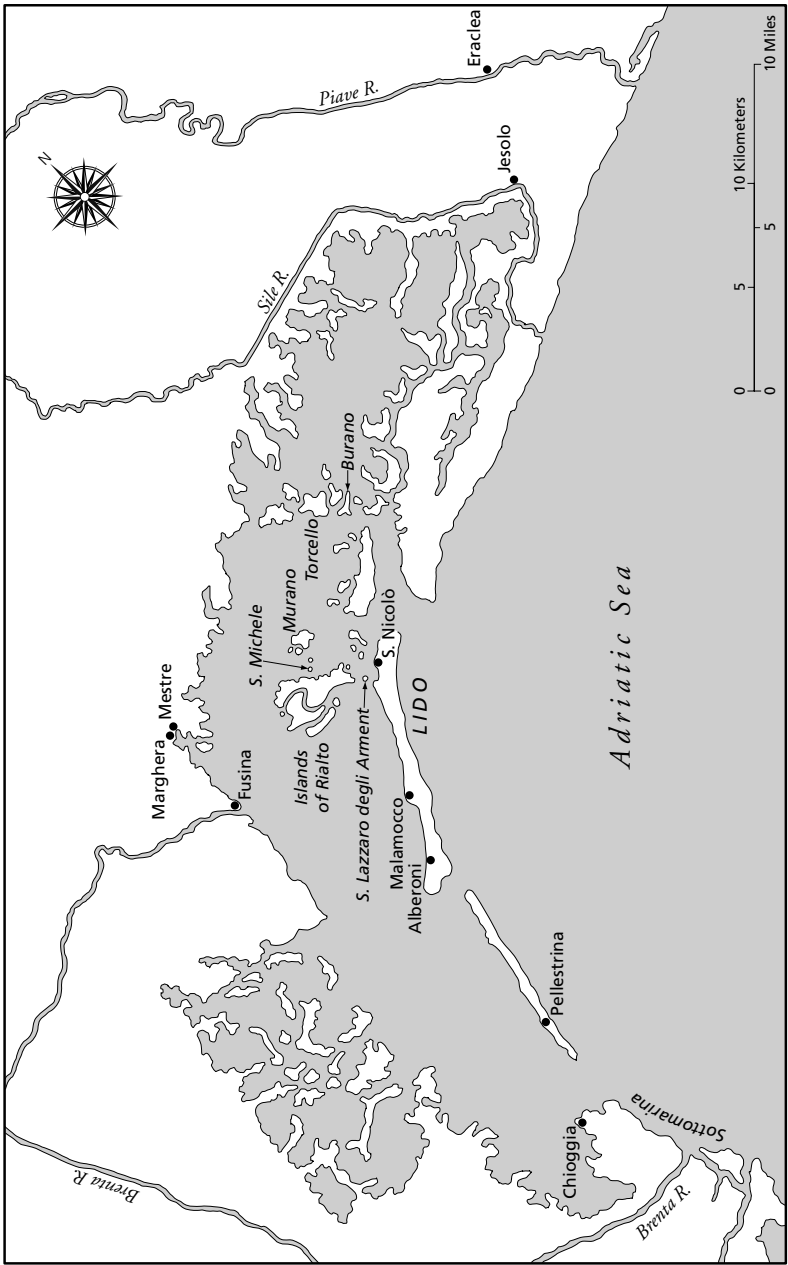
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VENICE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan

When used in its plural form, the term “Venice” long referred to two distinct geographical realities between Grado and Cavarzere. It first referred to the city which became the capital following the transfer of the ducal seat to Rialto, a populated and lively agglomeration located in the middle of the lagoons, the head of a state and an empire. But it also referred to the administrative duchy established during Byzantine Italy, the lands and waters, islands and barrier spits on which the capital city imposed its domination. This semantic singularity does not reflect lexical poverty. Quite the contrary, it embedded the reality of the city’s origins, the dispersion of communities over the lands and waters of the lagoon refuge as the first Venice—maritime Venice—was born. With time, however, things changed. In the 15th century, in the texts adopted by the various city councils, occurrences of the word “Rialto” were not uncommon. Yet when designating the capital city, that term tended to be supplanted by another, “Venice,” a word that, in the singular, lost its ambivalence, captured as it were by reference only to the city of the lagoon. The first meaning, however, disappeared only gradually, and its long survival speaks volumes. Venice dominated the lagoon basin but continued to associate its triumphal history with the small societies that survived in the space of its original jurisdiction, the territory of the duchy. Stripped of any autonomous destiny, these societies still reflect some of the luster of Venice’s name, and its history remains their history. Where the old meaning did survive, it served to preserve a memory, to show that the small communities of the lagoon continued to exist, at least symbolically, on several levels at the same time. First on a local scale, and second on an expanded scale which in some cases saw the union of their history with that of Venice. Eventually, the former meaning disappeared and memory transformed, becoming the matrix of a historical memory in that it is the “guardian of the problematic of the representative relationship of the present to the past.”¹

¹ P. Ricœur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris, 2000), p. 306.



Map 1.1. The Venetian Lagoon.

The words therefore have a history, and their history, here that of the word “Venice,” tells a different story. We can see why the relationship of Rialto-Venice to the environment in which the city was born and then grew was not the object of analysis for a long time. Any reflection on this matter was influenced by the radical transformation of balances within the lagoons and the establishment of the Venetian metropolis. It is often treated as though Venice has, naturally, always commanded its surrounding waters, those very waters which are deprived of their identity. Thus we discover a fundamental fact and a strange paradox that stand to be explained: the most unique trait of Venice, that of its site as a town “sitting on the water,” built “in the furthest reaches of the Adriatic Sea,” has been considered in the *longue durée* as a reality undeserving of critical commentary. At best, and without delving into deep chronology, scholarly attention often focused on hydrographic projects or coastal consolidation in modern times. As for the lagoons, they did receive individual analysis from time to time, but because these studies offered none of the necessary ties to the men who originally populated the area, and because they were more interested in geographic data, they often failed to transform the geographical matter into an historical object.

This chapter will therefore first put emphasis on that system of representations that, constructed by Venetian chronicles and histories, was then solidified by historiography. It will then be possible to bring both consistency and life back to the relationships that the Venetian community entertained within its own milieu.

The Refuge Lagoons or the Origins of an Environmental Fable

A first observation is required. The lagoons are widely present in the earliest Venetian chronicles. One need only mention Giovanni Diacono's narrative of the settlement of the lagoon site.² This chronicler invents, as we know, the theme of a double foundation. According to Diacono, there was supposedly an initial “Terraferma Venice” that was prosperous until the invasions. Then came a second foundation, in the lagoons this time, due

² G. B. Monticolo, ed., *Cronache veneziane antichissime*, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* (Rome, 1890); M. de Biasi ed., *La cronaca veneziana di Giovanni Diacono*, 2 vols (Venice, 1988). It is today believed that *La Chronica de singulis patriarchis Novae Aquileiae*, published in the *Cronache veneziane antichissime*, was composed between 1045 and 1053. The oldest Venetian narrative source is thus the text by Giovanni Diacono.

to the Lombard invasion, which would have marked a radical change on the *terraferma*.³ Rejecting barbarism and servitude, the inhabitants of the *terraferma*, Giovanni Diacono recounts, moved to the lagoons with the relics and treasures of their churches. They fled to maintain their freedom in the lagoon waters, free from any dependency. They were pious and, even when faced with the Arian Lombards, preserved their Christian faith. This account of the original migration, foundational in that it endows the Venetian community with a series of original virtues—Venice is ancient due to its earlier existence on the *terraferma*, the Venetians are free and pious—creates an image that lasts over the centuries and is as enduring as the Venetian waters.⁴ The lagoon basin, never described in the hostility and poverty of its marshes, is the very shelter where begins, or rather continues, a happy story. What does it matter, then, if successive versions of the second set of narrative fragments that document the early centuries of the duchy, the *Origo civitatum*, offer sometimes conflicting accounts of the conditions of this genesis?⁵ All of these texts, in effect, dramatize the march of the refugees into the lagoons, and all suggest the miraculous nature of the creation of the first Venice in the midst of marshes where heavenly signs and apparitions were already frequent.⁶

One rightly suspects that such imagery had serious implications for the writing of history. First, once the refoundation of Venice had started, the chronicles held as a fundamental truth that from within the asylum of the lagoon a very particular history might have been initiated. The texts maintain that the populations of Altino, Padua, Treviso, and Oderzo fled, and with the *terraferma* cities razed by the new conquerors, all ties were severed. The new society of the lagoon grew, freed from any dependence or domination. In the waters of the lagoon, a mission was assigned, that of keeping their people away from the vicissitudes of the mainland affairs. Thanks to this border, presented as impervious, the destinies of the lagoon and the mainland no longer interfered with one another. An assumption

³ *La cronaca veneziana del diacono Giovanni*, in *Cronache veneziane antichissime*, ed. G. Monticolo (Rome, 1890).

⁴ A. Carile, "Le origini di Venezia nella tradizione storiografica," in Arnaldi, Girolamo, and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 1 (1976): *Dalle origini al Trecento*, pp. 135–66; A. Carile-G. Fedalto, *Le origini di Venezia* (Bologna, 1978).

⁵ G. Fasoli, "I fondamenti della storiografia veneziana," in Agostino Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo XVI. Aspetti e problemi* (Florence, 1970), pp. 11–44, repr. in F. Bocchi, A. Carile, and A. I. Pini, *Scritti di storia medievale* (Bologna, 1974).

⁶ Roberto Cessi, *Origo civitatum Italiae seu Venetiarum* (Rome, 1933), pp. 30–35.

was thus wrought: the Venetians ignored the land. The rupture between the two worlds of the lagoon and the mainland is presumed to be ontological and should always be maintained. These assertions, which themselves eventually become veritable stereotypes, explain the orientations of a secular historiography and why these links of Venice to the *terraferma* were ignored for so long. This invented history of Venice, in celebrating the sanctuary of the lagoons, was obliged to deny the numerous exchanges between the city on the water and the mainland, as well as the evolving economic interpenetration which began several centuries before the territorial conquest. By essentially amputating the areas surrounding Venice, this historical construction provoked an amnesia about how quickly a *contado invisible*⁷ had been formed through the acquisition of more Venetian land about and how people, goods, and capital circulated. It became a matter of course to twist the reality of the lagoon's geography by never mentioning the existence, at the outer edges of the basin near Torcello in the north and in Brenta's southern delta, of an amphibious world where water, earth, and swamps met and where men came and went.⁸

From the moment when the Venetians decided to betray what had been their destiny, when they renounced what would have been the wise policy of their fathers and instead took an interest in the land, their history took a sharp turn. Tommaso Mocenigo's 1421 speech declaring that the fortunes of Venice were tied to trade clearly illustrates that certainty.⁹ Although the chroniclers did not wait for Mocenigo's dogma to see, in the expansion of commerce, the very principle of Venice's existence, his speech, like the one he allegedly made shortly before his death, has traditionally seemed to emphasize a turning point. After Mocenigo, with Francesco Foscari, the Venetian Signoria would become engaged in the affairs of Italy, which would in turn introduce them to the causes of their eventual decadence and ruin. So say the enemies of Venice, starting with the wars of Italy and the setbacks of the *Dominante* on the *terraferma*. So say also some Venetians, such as Girolamo Priuli, during the disastrous War of the League of Cambrai. Thus, it is in these terms that Venetian

⁷ S. Bortolami, "L'agricoltura," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 2 (1995): *L'età del comune*, ed. Giorgio Cracco and Gherardo Ortalli, pp. 461–90.

⁸ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *La mort lente de Torcello, Histoire d'une cité disparue* (Paris, 1992), pp. 216–49.

⁹ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venise triomphante. Les Horizons d'un mythe* (Paris, 1999), pp. 139 ff.

history has often been analyzed. Describing the early conquests in the Trevisan, Pierre Daru (1807–90) concludes:

This was the first establishment of the Venetians on the continent. This conquest of Trevisan produced a revolution in their political system, opened a new career for their ambition, gave them two hundred years of war, and repeatedly put their republic in extreme peril. For nine hundred years Venice flourished two leagues from the coast of Italy, powerful, in possession of an organized government, showing no ambitious views on the neighboring continent.¹⁰

The History of Italian Republics by Sismondi (1773–1842) is no more nuanced:

After Venice had acquired Terraferma states, this republic neglected its oversea provinces, its trade and its navy, true bases of its power, to engage in the politics of the continent: it took part in all the wars and in all the revolutions of Lombardy; and it elicited such jealousy, such deep and universal hatred, from which, after a century of intrigue and fighting, emerged the league of Cambrai.¹¹

In the work of this author, an admirer of economic liberalism, the concern for the defense and illustration of the merchant bourgeoisie accuses the traditional condemnation of the famous continental about-face.

For as long as the Venetian nobles, devoted solely to trade, have refrained from possessing even the smallest farm beyond their lagoons, they defied the efforts of both the barbarians and the combined efforts of Europe against them: when they exchanged these fleeting fortunes for holdings on the Terraferma, they tied to their own necks the very chain by which any powerful enemy could seize them.¹²

Let us cite, to conclude, a Venetian testimony taken from the copious writings of Pompeo Molmenti.¹³ There is no ambiguity in reading it. The golden age of Venice ends with continental conquests. All that then would have been necessary to ruin the Venetian monopoly was for the Portuguese to open a new trade route.

The territorial state would have formed a useless appendix, even a harmful one, of little interest to the historian. The knowledge of what had

¹⁰ Pierre Daru, *Histoire de la république de Venise*, 7 vols (Paris, 1819), 1:523, 2:150–51.

¹¹ J.-C.-L. Sismonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques italiennes du Moyen Age*, new ed., 16 vols (Paris, 1826), 8:131.

¹² *Ibid.*, 4:161–62.

¹³ Pompeo Molmenti, *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della repubblica*, 3 vols (Venice, 1905; repr. Trieste, 1978).

been the *dominium di terra* was therefore superficial for a long time inasmuch as the value of judgment surfaced: the Venetians should not have forgotten this “allegory of Homer, who made fortune the daughter of the sea.”¹⁴ A radical reversal of perspective was therefore necessary so that the continental horizons could finally emerge as a historiographic theme.¹⁵

In the Venetian system of representations, the lagoons were the foundation of independence as well as, in a second set of remarks, the future power of the city. These waters soon opened themselves, in effect, to other domains: the sheltered lagoons allowed for maritime adventure. If, naturally, the Venetians ignored the land, they got the sea in return. And when they were not navigating the waters of the lagoon or the sea, they simply travelled up the rivers which flowed into the basin, allowing them to broaden the horizons of their early trade. Undoubtedly the lagoon community, deprived of any agricultural territory, did not have any other choice but to navigate and trade to ensure its survival. But this need, in the interpretation of the chronicles, becomes the fulfillment of a destiny, the realization of a design, and thus quickly and profoundly marked historiographic decisions, otherwise rather keen, concerning the city. For the Venetians, as well as for their past (or recent) historians, the prefect Cassiodorus had already said everything:¹⁶ “Here, no scythe nor any other instrument to cultivate the land, but boats and cylinders used for the production of raw salt.” The Venetians were not familiar with the plow and yet already they were sailing. A few centuries later, the precarious shelter of rushes of the earlier centuries had been transformed into a city of stones. The Venetians were rich, and they still did not know the plow: they sailed. This historiographic mold was quite long-lived. Here are some lines from Marc’Antonio Sabellico (c.1436–1506): “The new city grew thanks to all things maritime; even before the Lombard invasion, it quickly cut down the marauders of the seas.”¹⁷ Or the official history of Paolo Morosini: “Against the Narentins, the Dalmatians, the Goths, the

¹⁴ Daru, *Histoire de la république*, 2:282.

¹⁵ Crouzet-Pavan, *Venise triomphante*, pp. 139–46.

¹⁶ Cassiodore was born c.470–80 and died c.570–75. This high functionary was charged with organizing, just prior to the Byzantine attack against Ostrogoth Italy, the supplying of Ravenna. He thus negotiates, in a letter dating from 537–38, with the Venetian “maritime tribunes” the shipping of merchandise to Ravenna by Venetian ships: A. J. Fridh, ed., *Corpus Christianorum, series latina* XCVI, *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Senatoris opera, Variorum, Libri XII* (Turnhout, 1973), pp. 491–92.

¹⁷ Marc’Antonio Sabellico, *Degl’istorici delle cose veneziane i quali hanno scritto per pubblico decreto, tomo primo che comprende le istorie veneziane latinamente scritte da Marcantonio Coccio Sabellico* (Venice, 1718), pp. 15–21.

naval victories came one after the other."¹⁸ Finally, to cite the work of Filiassi which appeared in the early 19th century:

the lagoons, at the gates of Italy, at the foot of the nearby Alps, within the reach of all the Alpine and Danubian countries, are dedicated to commerce. These estuaries have always been populated by sailors and merchants. On the threshold of the sixth century, the Venetians were already engaged in significant trade.¹⁹

In this text that reflects an entire historical production, Filiassi elevates geographical determinism to the level of necessity, and it assumes the role that the purposes of God had played in the writing of previous authors. But regardless of who the master of history may be, it is a unique destiny that has been vested in Venice. In sum, these texts, whether they were written in the 16th or the 19th century, created and consolidated a myth that the power of Venice would at one time render almost true. The history of Venice turned its back to the land. It would be the same for its coherence and its profound meaning, for the command of the waves had been given to the lagoon city.

In sum, the long-fueled legend of the origins transformed what was an ungrateful environment, bodies of water and mud, into a site that is seen to be more suitable than any other. That is, insular Venice is born free and unique, before becoming, thanks to maritime adventures, both powerful and rich, and its insularity guarantees the community's freedom and influence.

Third, and last, the historical narrative has over time also sought to establish the fiction of the primacy of Rialto-Venice over the other communities. The barrier beaches and islands of lagunal Venice were grouped under the authority first of a military leader, then a doge. The seat of the duchy, which had been transferred in the 8th century from the first capital, Eraclea-Cittanova, to the barrier beach of Malamocco, moved yet again and was established in 810 in Rialto-Venice. But starting in the 12th century, the narrative tradition confers upon the archipelago of Rialto primitive hegemonic position.²⁰ History, often written in the vicinity of

¹⁸ Paolo Morosini, *Historia della città e repubblica di Venetia di Paolo Morosini senatore veneziano distinta in libri vintiotto* (Venice, 1637), pp. 7–12.

¹⁹ G. Filiassi, *Ricerche storico-critiche sull'opportunità della laguna veneta pel commercio sull'arti e sulla marina di questo stato* (Venice, 1803), pp. 3–8.

²⁰ Vittorio Lazzarini, "Il preteso documento della fondazione di Venezia e la cronaca del medico Jacopo Dondi," *Atti dell'Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* 75/2 (1915–16), pp. 1263–81; Martino da Canale, *Les Estoires de Venise, Cronaca veneziana in lingua francese*

power, was reconstructed and the official memory—due to its increasing tendency to make Rialto-Venice a predestined island, the shelter promised by God in his benevolence toward his children—was for the rest of the lagoon synonymous with oblivion.²¹

This memory was so strongly established that for a long time it weighed heavily on scholarly history. Of course, revisions were made gradually. In the 15th century, the medieval legend of St. Mark dreaming that the lagoons would be the place of his eternal rest is no longer recounted.²² And the contention made by Paduan consuls in 421 regarding the foundation of Rialto-Venice is sometimes refuted. Nevertheless, the idea would not die so easily. In his *Principi di Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, published in 1755, Vettor Sandi, for instance, takes it up again.²³ The Abbot Laugier (1713–69) follows suit. He reminds us of the “antiquity of the town of Rialta, a colony that is independent of the magistrates of Padua.”²⁴ Count Daru,²⁵ like Sismondi,²⁶ does not miss this necessary passage. This also explains the reading of J. Ruskin (1819–1900). “421: In that year, and on the very day—(little foolish Venice used to say, when she was a very child),—in which, once upon a time, the world was made; and, once upon another time—the Ave Maria first said,—the first stone of Venice was laid on the sea sand, in the name of St. James the fisher.”²⁷

Thus history has produced fiction, and for a very long time. Following the effect of gravity and the fascination exerted by the sources, fiction has conditioned the writing of history, and the entire questioning of the relationship of the capital city to its environment is wrapped in the strait-jacket of primitive narrative schemas. It is thus necessary for that fiction to become an object of history so that the Venetian environment can be seen in its completeness. Let us now turn our attention to the first of the Venetian environments, the waters that surround the city.

dalle origini al 1275, ed. A. Limentani (Florence, 1972), p. 6; Cronaca di Marco, B. N. Marciana, It. cl. XI, cod. 124, f° 37r. Crouzet-Pavan, *La mort lente*, p. 369.

²¹ Crouzet-Pavan, *La mort lente*, pp. 60–65, 72–73.

²² Da Canale, *Les estoires*, p. 340, Cronaca di Marco, f° 5v; Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica per extensum descripta: aa 46–1280 d.c.*, ed. E. Pastorello, *Rerum Italicorum scriptores* 12, Part 1 (Bologna, 1942), p. 9.

²³ *Principi di storia civile della Repubblica di Venezia dalla sua fondazione sino all'anno di n. s. 1700 scritte da Vettor Sandi, nobile veneto* (Venice, 1755), p. 25.

²⁴ Vettor Sandi, *Histoire de la République de Venise depuis sa fondation jusqu'à présent par Monsieur l'abbé Laugier*, 12 vols (Paris, 1759), 1:132.

²⁵ Daru, *Histoire de la république*, 1:21.

²⁶ Sismonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques*, 1:304, 306–08.

²⁷ John Ruskin, *St. Mark's Rest* (New York, 1877), p. 25.

"Sopra le Acque Salse"

In the words of chronicles, by maps, and through successive representations, an image of Venice was imposed. According to this representation, the city—a harmonious structure of stone, wood, and brick—reigns over the various elements of the lagoon. A triumph of human industry, the city would dominate the elements and an orderly and peaceful environment, the asylum that was offered to her at the very beginning of her history. To read the chronicles, like that of Lorenzo de Monaci (early 15th century), once the seat of the duchy was installed at Rialto, the agglomeration would soon develop: "Bridges are built to connect the sixty islands that surround the small island of Rialto. And with God's help, this new form of city grew in the midst of the marshes and marine waters, with no pastures, no fields, no vineyards."²⁸ The Abbot Laugier and Sismondi say the same: "Since that time, Rialto has become the capital of the new state; bridges have been used to link this first island to the sixty islands surrounding it, over which the city of Venice now spreads";²⁹ "Bridges have been used to link this first island to the sixty islands surrounding it, over which the city of Venice now spreads. The ducal palace was raised on the very spot where it still exists today."³⁰ The image is drawn and redrawn. The power of its sway explains why the morphological evolution of the Venetian agglomeration was for a long time left unscrutinized by historical analysis, as if the city had always been wonderfully suspended between land and water, as if the *forma urbis* had been acquired at the birth of Rialto.

The pervasiveness of this image explains secondarily why the lagoon environment was consistently ignored by the general histories of Venice. As has been noted, monographs were certainly devoted to the geography of the lagoons and to the progress of the human footprint on the environment. But until recent contributions, they constituted a particular historiographical sector whose eventual contributions had not been integrated in any overall reflection.³¹ The originality of the ecosystem was, of course, stressed.³² The particularities of the site were among the various parameters capable of determining the longevity of a republic which had

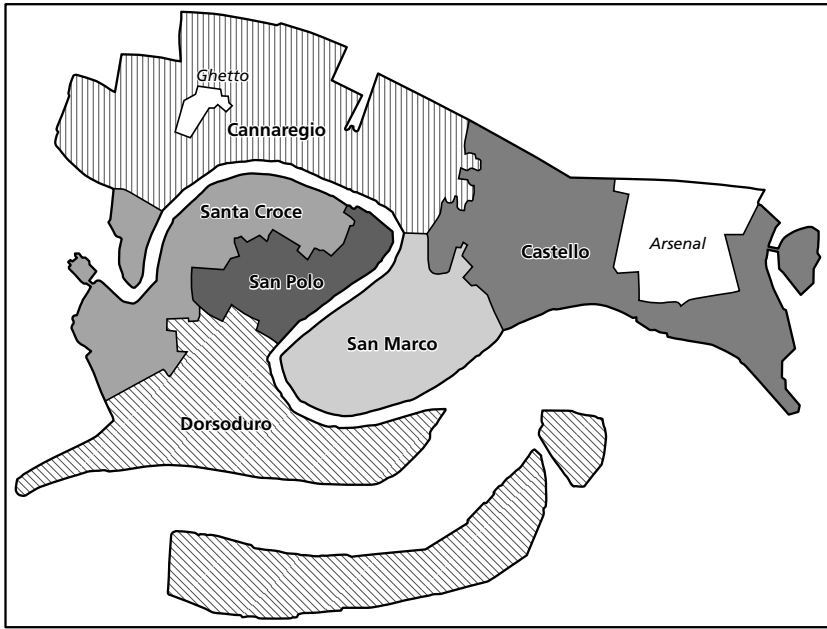
²⁸ Laurentii de Monacis, *Chronicon de rebus venetis* (Venice, 1758), pp. 13–15, 27.

²⁹ Abbé Laugier, *Histoire de la République de Venise*, p. 176.

³⁰ Sismonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques*, 1:316–17.

³¹ Crouzet-Pavan, *Venise triomphante*, pp. 61, 368.

³² Daru, *Histoire de la république*, 1:1.



Map 1.2. The Sestieri of Venice.

seen “the birth of the empire of the caliphs, had seen it threaten to invade their lands, and had seen it divide and destroy itself,” which also, “being a longtime ally of the emperors of Byzantium, had time and again rescued and oppressed them.”³³ “The very nature of the country that the Venetians inhabited was the cause of their long independence.” “The winding, interlaced canals of the lagoon form an impenetrable maze for any pilot who has not spent a long time studying and navigating their layout.”³⁴ Even the scenery of the lagoons was planted. But as soon as the irresistible growth of Rialto-Venice began, this process tended only to attract historical attention, and the water, a wonderful element of the Venetian scenery now domesticated, was only mentioned to better describe Venice’s urban aesthetic and theatricality.

Yet then as now, the existence and the continued survival of Venice do not depend only on the mastery of the immediate urban environment. The fate of the city, irreducibly, is linked to that of the lagoon basin, a fragile

³³ Sismonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques*, 1:299.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:299–300.

environment in constant evolution that cannot be understood without bringing to mind some definitions of lagoon geography.

The Lagoon Environment

The Venetian basin represents the largest set of lagoons on the northern coast of the Adriatic.³⁵ Remnants of the vast complex that stretched between the Po and the Isonzo, these expanses of brackish salt water are protected and almost completely separated from the sea by a series of sandy barrier beaches (the *lidi*). But they are also invigorated by the flow of the tides which enter through the coastal inlets; an evolving series of *graus*—ports—assures that the lagoon waters can exchange with the sea water. It was only recently discovered that their number has been reduced to three: the Chioggia inlet, which opens to the south, and, closer to Venice, the Malamocco and Lido inlets. In this aquascape made of flawless

³⁵ The bibliography on the lagoon is at the same time both immense and of varying quality: Giulio Rompiasio, *Metodo in pratica di sommario, o sia compilazione delle leggi, terminazioni & ordini appartenenti agl'illustrissimi & eccellentissimi Collegio e Magistrato alle acque* (Venice, 1771), ed. Giovanni Caniato (Venice, 1988); C. Tentori, *Della legislazione veneziana sulla preservazione della laguna. Dissertazione storico-filosofico-critica* (Venice, 1792); B. Zendrini, *Memorie storiche dello stato antico e moderno delle lagune di Venezia e di quei fiumi che restarono divertiti per la conservazione delle medesime* (Padua, 1811); C. Vacani di Forteolivolo, *Della laguna di Venezia e dei fiumi nelle attigue provincie. Memorie* (Florence, 1867); A. Averone, *Saggio sull'antica idrografia veneta* (Mantua, 1911). Several other more recent titles testify of a different historiographical approach: the International Centre of Arts and Costumes' *Mostra storica della laguna veneta* (Venice, 1970), especially contributions by B.-L. Lanfranchi, "La Laguna dal secolo VI al XIV," pp. 74–84; M. F. Tiepolo, "Difesa a mare," pp. 133–38; P. Selmi, "Politica lagunare della Veneta Repubblica dal secolo XIV al secolo XVIII," pp. 105–15; and G. A. Ravalli Modoni, "Scrittori tecnici di problemi lagunari," pp. 169–73. See also Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici, *Magistrato alle acque, Venezia, Convegno di studi, Laguna, fiumi, lidi; cinque secoli di gestione delle acque nelle Venezie* (Venice, 1983); and Archivio di stato di Venezia, *Laguna, lidi, fiumi. Cinque secoli di gestione delle acque* (Venice, 1983). The studies of Giuseppe Pavanello and Roberto Cessi continue to be very useful: Pavanello, "Di un'antica laguna scomparsa (La laguna eracliana)," *Archivio veneto tridentino* 3 (1923), 263–307; Pavanello, *La laguna veneta (Note illustrative e breve sommario storico)* (Rome, 1931); Pavanello, "Della caduta dell'Impero romano alla costituzione de nuovi centri politici e della laguna veneta propriamente detta," in G. Brunelli et al., eds., *La laguna di Venezia*, part 3: *La storia della laguna fino al 140* (Venice, 1935), chap. 28, pp. 53–73; Cessi, "Il problema della Brenta dal secolo XII al secolo XV," in G. Brunelli et al., eds., *La laguna di Venezia* (Venice, 1943), vol. 1, part 4, bk. 7, pp. 3–107; Cessi, "Lo sviluppo dell'interramento nella laguna settentrionale e il problema della Piave e del Sile fino al secolo XV," in Brunelli et al., eds., *La laguna di Venezia*, pp. 79–108; Cessi, "Evoluzione storica del problema lagunare," in *Atti del Convegno per la conservazione e difesa della laguna e città di Venezia* (Venice, 1960), pp. 23–64. We must also cite W. Dorigo, *Venezia Origini*, 3 vols (Milan, 1983).

horizontality, some land emerges, also flat. These are the *barene*, covered by a particular aquatic vegetation, growing to just a few inches above the water, and which are only covered by the highest tides. These are small islands and archipelagos, undoubtedly formed by the alluvial deposits of the rivers that flow into the basin, which have been gradually consolidated and expanded by human work. This whole ecosystem has been and remains the subject of incessant transformation, due to the combined action of the sea, the rivers, and human intervention. As it stands today, the lagoon is in fact profoundly different from what it was in the Middle Ages or in early modern times. We must, therefore, insist on a reality: here, the environment lives according to a specific chronology proper to itself; it moves and changes at the will of forces that are antagonistic and difficult for man to control. On the one hand, the sea level varies. On the other hand, in this area, the ground collapses under the weight of river silt deposits. And the combination of these two phenomena, subsidence and temporary rise in sea level, may result in a danger: that of the emerged land being flooded by water. At the base of the Adriatic, the movements of the sea reach, in fact, a level unknown elsewhere in the Mediterranean. The tide, which enters through the *graus* and rises through internal channels, then by urban canals, sets the pace for Venetian life. It renews the water, purifying it. It assures, in so doing, the survival of the lagoon basin.

But high tides, compounded by heavy rains and the effects of the wind, cause veritable phenomena of temporary flooding. *Aqua alta*, for several hours, invades the area, or at very least its lower parts. These exceptional tides can attack the banks, carry away protective walls, gnaw away at the lagoon islands, and submerge the barrier beaches that are already battered daily by the swell, the waves, and the erosion of the sea. The Malamocco *lido* was thus in the early 12th century partly submerged. The barrier beach of Sant'Erasmo was overwhelmed, in the middle of the next century, by a similar flood. If the coastal defense was compromised, that was a first risk, for the sea invaded and swept away everything. Both the lagoon and Venice disappeared. But there was another danger, that of the siltation of rivers, which could also condemn the lagoon to decay. Silt would stop up the lagoons, filling their depths. The *lidi*, already reinforced by longshore currents and sand accumulations, threatened, if the sedimentation was too great, to form a continuous barrier. The ports became overrun with silt. They could be closed off more or less rapidly, isolating a pool that had been doomed to a quick filling.

This environmental fragility allows for an immediate comprehension of the challenges of life in the lagoon: without work, without taking actions

to safeguard it, the site of Venice was condemned. Therefore, in the history we write, it is necessary to distinguish between levels of interpretation. Yes, for centuries, the Venetians developed a providential design of their own destiny: only God could allow life to thrive in the midst of salt water. This first mode of thinking, however, did not prevent them from undertaking an active policy of environmental design. Confronted with the uncertainties of nature, mindful of the vulnerability to which they were exposed, they sought to prevent and protect. In sum, to put it in current terms, the authorities managed the risk. Prevention, protection, compensation, aid released after the damage of the *aqua alta*—the arsenal of methods used do not differ from those that geographers and risk specialists identify today. Especially since, and this is another fact that makes the Venetian situation particularly instructive, human impact further increased the risk. The history of risk management thereby conforms to a precise chronology that must be explained step by step.

Chronology and Evolution of an Appropriated Space

For centuries, the community gave no priority to efforts at coastal defense. It was necessary to build, create, and beautify, to organize the supply of drinking water. Here the rare documentary evidence is consistent with the narrative sources. The city thus initially focused on growing and resolving day by day the difficulties related to the site. Works are certainly attested to in the lagoon, but controlled by the major lineages of landowners, they were used primarily, in the creating fisheries, mills, and salt works, for the exploitation of the aquatic areas. Thus, while communal oversight was already organizing urban construction, the coastlines are not listed among the elements of the environment. Water, land, marshes, and *canetus* were all entrusted to these officers, though everything leads us to believe that the barrier beach was, in many areas, severely and regularly neglected.

During the decades of active Venetian urban policy in the last third of the 13th century, however, a general guardianship of the coasts was put in place. The scale of the work sites and their management changed until the early decades of the 15th century, when the pace of intervention became more sustained. A 15th-century chronicle that runs almost uninterrupted for hundreds of pages, the archives of the magistrates over salt production, tells of these works in all their variations and sequences.³⁶ The storm

³⁶ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque salse. Espaces, pouvoir et société à Venise à la fin du Moyen Age*, 2 vols (Rome, 1992), 1:344–57.

opened a breach in the coastal defense; in the immediate aftermath, it was necessary to close the breach, while later it would be rebuilt, restored, and consolidated. Embankments of earth were raised, over time establishing buffer zones. Directly in front of this, the Venetians built another embankment out of stone that could withstand the assault of the waves. In a continuous sort of dance, ships brought loads of stone blocks from the Dalmatian coast to be used in this defense. Elsewhere, doubled or even tripled rows of stone were used to stabilize the shoreline. In the second half of the century, adjudications reveal how the construction of this defensive layer was commissioned to contractors and a skilled workforce at an ongoing cost. The public authority conducted a project of coastal defense that was both consistent and expensive. Certain figures testify to this point. In 1424, 6000 ducats were spent each year on the coasts;³⁷ in 1469, more than 11,000; in 1490, 10,800 ducats.³⁸ In 1496, the same sum was spent, though the work never seemed to be complete.³⁹ On this front, this represents a very long history because the *murazzi* [embankments], built at a great expense before the disappearance of the sovereign state of Venice, secured the beaches that the stony embankments of the 15th century protected—a history in which we have to underline the role of the construction yards of the 15th century.⁴⁰

Venice's hydrographic problem has been present since its origin and is central in the history of relations between Venice and the *terraferma* cities. But, faced with river siltation, unable to intervene in the rivers' course further upstream, Venice had for a long time a single solution: containing dykes. After various studies and periodic development, a first defense project was developed in 1324. It would divert the water of the Brenta far from the Rialto Basin, hereafter isolated and protected, or so it was hoped, by a system of dikes.⁴¹ The aim was to deter freshwater flows and the risks that they posed in silting the central basin, especially the port. The conquest of the *terraferma* then allowed Venetian engineers to design more radical diversionary operations. In the second half of the 15th century, the question of altering the course of the Brenta was therefore at the heart of the debate: its mud continually threatened Venice, near the tip

³⁷ Archivio di Stato di Venezia (A.S.V.), Provveditori al Sal, B. 6, fol. 56r.

³⁸ R. Commissione per la pubblicazione dei Documenti finanziari della Repubblica di Venezia, serie seconda, *Bilanci Generali*, ed. F. Besta, 3 vols (Venice, 1903–1912), vol. 1, bk. 1, pp. 148, 163.

³⁹ A.S.V., Provveditori al Sal, B. 6 (reg. 8), fols 88v–89r.

⁴⁰ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Villes vivantes. Italie. XIII^e–XV^e siècle* (Paris, 2009), pp. 85–100.

⁴¹ Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque salse*, 1:358–59.

of Santa Marta. Work sites were established, the most imposing of which would finally change the course of the river. Still, it only moved the threat of sedimentation to the southern lagoons, giving rise to new fears and questions.

During these decades of the 15th century, changes can be observed. The lagoon environment had always been described as a positive space, a sort of protective "cocoon." For centuries, the history of Venice was being built and had been established as a hallmark of vitality, a dynamism demonstrated by the facts and by the repetition of these views. Despite the technical difficulties, potential failure, and the cost of the work, the texts reflected a sense of optimism. However, during the 15th century this seems to waver. The land had become, since the move to the Rialto, the conqueror, and the water had become a threat. The vocabulary changes, and Venice is described as being confronted by the perilous water, endangering the environment built at its heart. The history is hereafter that of a living space, providentially built by men but assaulted by a deadly force against which daily labor was necessary. One by one, the rhetorical mechanisms of a city in danger are put into place. In a sign that accurately reflects the progress of thought on hydraulic matters and a growing sensitivity to the problems of the site, the first treatise on the lagoon is written in the second half of the century.⁴² It emanated from the elite who had taken over the offices constituting the new bureaucracy of the Venetian state. The author, Marco Corner, who was for a time in charge of the wood supply, first led an inspection tour of the northern basin of the lagoon, where the rivers brought loads of wood. Then, twice elected as an expert on the waters, it fell to him to oversee the major project that had just been launched, the diversion of the Brenta.⁴³ This nobleman then wrote the history of the lagoon and offered a systematic program of water diversion because, according to his analysis, the lagoons were seriously threatened by the siltation of the rivers.⁴⁴ This text, one can argue, was a call to arms. An examination of the public records paints a bleak picture.

⁴² Marco Cornaro, *Scritture sulla laguna*, ed. G. Pavanello, *Antichi scrittori d'idraulica veneta*, 1 (Venice, 1919).

⁴³ G. Gullino, "Corner, Marco," in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 29 (Rome, 1983), pp. 254–55.

⁴⁴ After Corner, Paolo Sabbadino at the end of the 15th century also suggested a program of the radical diversion of the rivers, but it is the discourses on the lagoon made by his son, Cristoforo, which constitute the best example of an accomplished reflection on the problems of the lagoon basin: Cristoforo Sabbadino, *Discorsi sopra la laguna*, ed. R. Cessi (Venice, 1930).

Corner deplored the silting of the coastal channel and the progression of the marshes and of the dead lagoon. The councils and magistrates describe the same dangers.

Thus the port: the *grau* nearest Venice, San Nicolò, had always provided unwelcoming natural conditions. Starting in the 14th century, various works were carried out to try to improve the situation of the channel.⁴⁵ But in the second half of the 15th century, these works would become continuous. By restricting the width of the Malamocco inlet through the sinking of rafts and timber crates, the experts hoped to reinvigorate the movement of water in the San Nicolò inlet. Nothing worked, however. Therefore, the usual palliatives, such as the loading and unloading of barges, no longer sufficed, and for ships of large size, traffic tended to be diverted to the Malamocco inlet. Additionally, siltation continued to progress and healthy lagoons diminished, becoming stagnant as tidal flows no longer reached them. The engineer Piero Sambo in 1505 attempted to measure the increase of the phenomenon in the time since the works that his father had previously directed.⁴⁶ Where they had found four feet of water, now only three remained. Where salt water had previously been three, four, five, or even six feet deep, meadows, fields, and pastures now stretched.⁴⁷ But the phenomenon posed an equal threat to the urban canal system. There was a water shortage. The silt-filled canals produced fetid air and miasma. This pollution threatened the city. Text after text describes the danger. Marshes and reeds besieged the city. They gnawed at the lagoon, and even in the city, grass grew in the *rii* [canals]. Senate proceedings show that, along with the canals, the preservation of the city itself was threatened. The work of dredging out the canals was conducted at regular intervals.⁴⁸ Most operations were still done by hand, by shovel once the waterway had been sectioned off and dried out. But, on the Grand Canal, machines were used, for which the records indicate requests for the first patents. An observation justifies all these works: "In the past, a break of thirty years or more could be observed between each

⁴⁵ Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque salse*, 1:355–57.

⁴⁶ It is about the labors on the course of the Brenta from Lizzafusina to the canal of Corbola.

⁴⁷ *Antichi scrittori d'idraulica veneta*, vol. 3: *La difesa idraulica della laguna veneta nel secolo XVI. Relazioni dei periti*, ed. R. Cessi and N. Spada (Venice, 1952), pp. 5–8; S. Ciriaco, "Scrittori d'idraulica e politica delle acque," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal Primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 2, pp. 491–512.

⁴⁸ Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque salse*, 1:319–33.

dredging out of the canals, we must now resort to them every ten years.”⁴⁹ Also, there was the accelerated siltation of the north basin, subjected to the deleterious effects of an increase in swamps, freshwater, and masses of salt-water plants where mosquitoes thrived.⁵⁰ The result, around the archipelago of Torcello, was a veritable wave of death.⁵¹

Thus, at the time of these dangers and the increased awareness of them, the situation had changed considerably. The Venetian Signoria in the early 16th century had at their disposal a significantly increased capacity for intervention. The constitution of the territorial state had, in effect, drastically turned upside down the key factors as well as the stakes of the lagoon's problem. It had become possible for Venetians to take action further upstream to where the rivers led into the lagoon basin, so much so that a considerable part of the council debates, terrain inspections, and an abundant literature on hydrographic problems, all revolved around this issue. But, continental expansion had also changed the economic balance of Venice. For the Signoria, it became necessary to reconcile the interests of a city, whose fortunes depended on trade, with the interests of an agricultural and artisanal *terraferma* state, victim of the chaos and flooding of the capricious rivers.⁵² Attempts to change the course of the rivers thus aroused difficulties and conflicts as these two contradictory demands could not always be met exactly. The hydrographic issues created long-lasting division among the councils; to simplify this division, one party was for the port and the lagoon while the other party was for the hinterland, and so favorably inclined to agricultural development. How were they to reconcile the development of the available swamplands at the edge of the lagoon with the fragile balance of the water?

We suppose that public policy was impaired, delayed, or deviated, subjected as it was to lobbying and multiple changes in direction. However, such a finding should not obscure the most important fact: this public policy could now be deployed, outside the basin, on the scale of the *stato di terra*. Furthermore, all indications are that the knowledge of the area had, thanks to the joint development of both practical and scientific cultures, made remarkable progress. From then on, they would profit from the experience of competent ship navigators, fishermen, and wise and

⁴⁹ A. S. V., Senato, Terra, reg. 12, fol. 41r.

⁵⁰ On changing the course of the Dese, see R. Cessi, “Lo sviluppo dell'interramento.”

⁵¹ Crouzet-Pavan, *La mort lente de Torcello*, pp. 326–35.

⁵² S. Ciriaco, “Scrittori d'idraulica,” pp. 491–512.

elderly men in addressing the problems of the lagoon.⁵³ However, historical and scientific observations could now be associated to empirical knowledge of the terrain and to the observations of artists; the example of Marco Corner's treatise on the lagoon testifies to this. A stockpile of information had been gathered, and reports, records, and drawings were preserved. Archives were thus created that also incorporated all former provisions regarding the waters and the lagoon.⁵⁴ A pool of competent engineers had also formed over time. This pool could rely on a group of contractors specializing in aquatic projects, able to implement certain advanced techniques, as evidenced by the progress of the coastal defense or the patent applications for dredgers. Finally, until the last third of the 15th century, several magistrates had been in charge of the coasts, the harbor, and hydrographic works. It is necessary to see in this organization on the one hand the effects of a common practice that often distributed skills, which created new magistracies without deleting the old ones, and which additionally added extra magistracies to the established offices that were elected for the duration of a single project or a particular work. But it is especially important to recognize the consequences of an administration that dissociated elements from their environment. Thus, in the last third of the 15th century, as *Savi alle acque* were increasingly elected, a specialized magistracy was established, with a technical staff employed in a stable manner. The new office responsible for environmental regulations would reward its own engineers.⁵⁵ In sum, the various elements of a complex system—the rivers, coastlines, harbors, swamps, the conglomeration itself—were gradually considered as a single unit.

Even though the debates remained bitter and the proposed solutions remained contradictory, in the first half of the 16th century, the principles of water policy took a clearer shape. It is in the 17th century that these "macrohydraulic" interventions would be realized, which would eliminate the threat of the rivers and would establish the present configuration of the lagoon basin.⁵⁶ It was only then, after countless projects, after the limited interventions motivated by one main goal, to save the central lagoon, that is to say, the waters surrounding Venice, that the rescue

⁵³ Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque salse*, 1:362–63.

⁵⁴ A. S.V, Savi ed Esecutori alle acque, B. 330, fols 60v, 63v; B. 331, fols 13v–14r.

⁵⁵ A. Favaro, "Notizie storiche sul magistrato veneto alle acque," *Nuovo Archivio veneto*, n.s., 9 (1905), 179–99.

⁵⁶ S. Ciriaco, *Acque e agricoltura. Venezia, l'Olanda e la bonifica europea in età moderna* (Milan, 1994), pp. 162–70.

of the northern basin was actually scheduled. The threat of the Sile and Piave rivers was eliminated; the freshwaters were separated from the salt water. The northern lagoon was saved, but was greatly retracted.

The Effects of Human Settlement

How can one not see the stunning relevance of the elements just discussed? If we follow their organization, Venetian history would reflect on its own scale the very history of the relationship of man to the environment. It would mark in an exemplary way how learning to dominate the natural elements was slow and difficult. But it would also show, since Venice survived despite all obstacles, that the fight was victorious in the end. But such a reading, precisely the one that the Venetians in the 15th or 16th century produced from their own history, declaring that the miracle of Venice was also made possible by the actions of men, supported by policies, and a constant struggle against death, is in fact strictly dependent on the traditional Western view of a nature that existed to be subjected to and controlled by mankind. Such an assumption explains an oft-forgotten phenomenon that is nevertheless central: humans were a dominant ecological agent in the lagoon basin.

The establishment of a city that was in the early 16th century one of the largest centers of consumption and production in the West was not without consequences for a vulnerable environment. First, because the very dynamics of the construction of the city tended to upset the relationship between the land and the water. Next, the life, the activity of this city, because it was large and industrious, weighed heavily on the site. One could not enumerate all of the effects of the growth of the conglomeration in this environment, and, obviously, they are not all known. Venice traded and produced; the network of canals, which at first served to promote trade, were then assigned the function of processing urban waste. Waste waters, waters polluted by tanneries and dyeing, rubble of construction, litter from the market, waste from the ovens used to bake lime and bricks... everything went into the canals as elsewhere everything went into the river. Without a doubt, the waters here were not stagnant; the tide played a purifying role and evacuated the polluted water out of the basin. But the silting up of the canals increased. Human excesses contributed to a change in the land-water relationship; the abundant production of regulations on the protection of the air and the water and repeated complaints from residents attest to the birth, starting in the late Middle

Ages, of a genuine concern about pollution.⁵⁷ Regarding the history of the lagoons, made through constant development, it shows the absolute necessity of also studying the landscape in the evolution of its relationship to man.

Take the example of the northern basin. Until the second half of the 11th century, the salt pans were mainly concentrated in this area.⁵⁸ The decline and the gradual reorganization of salt production, in the south, around Chioggia, caused radical economic restructuring.⁵⁹ From the late 13th century on, an impressive infrastructure for fishing was implemented, and the iconography, even belated, is not sufficient to account either for the importance of fishing in these waters or for the landscape, transformed by man, which was that of the northern lagoon at the end of the Middle Ages.⁶⁰ Thus everything attests from the 15th century on to an overexploitation of natural resources that resulted from the post-plague demographic recovery, also explained by heavy investment in the sector of fishing *valli*. The changing, fragile environment is rendered even more unstable and fragile by over-exploitation.

There is one last factor that came to magnify the impact of human activity on the lagoon environment. The works on the site, whether hydrographic interventions or operations to preserve the shorelines, were not neutral. Any attempt to contain or divert rivers, any decision to close or reopen a coastal inlet, effectively acted on the ensemble of delicate balances, without otherwise affording the actors of these changes little more than the awareness of their existence. Hence this notation of which we should not lose sight: industrial societies had no exclusive monopoly on environmental transformation,⁶¹ and it was the very existence of Venetian urban life that was a driving force for the transformation of the lagoon ecosystem, well before the environmental impact of contemporary civilization.

In this connected history of a living place and of the vision of it that the community that had established itself there possessed, three observations,

⁵⁷ Crouzet-Pavan, *Villes vivantes*, pp. 201–07.

⁵⁸ ASV, Piovego, B. 3 Codex Publicorum (Codice del Piovego; B. Lanfranchi Strina, Codex Publicorum, Fonti per la storia di Venezia, sez. 1. Archivi pubblici (Venice, 1985).

⁵⁹ J. C. Hocquet, *Chioggia capitale del sale nel Medioevo* (Sottomarina, 1991), pp. 33–34, 50–52.

⁶⁰ Crouzet-Pavan, *La mort lente de Torcello*, pp. 180–83.

⁶¹ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan and J. P. Poussou, "L'histoire de l'environnement: un retour à la macro-histoire (Économie et écologie: ennemies ou alliées?)," *XVIII^e Congrès des sciences historiques* (Montreal, 1995), pp. 369–96.

again surprisingly topical, can be deduced. One might first note that, once again, Venice seems to be losing its self-appointed uniqueness, though many historians continue to ascribe to this view because of the city's creation and its construction in the middle of a lagoon. Like other large cities, long before industrialization and the urban revolution, it was characterized by its impact on the environment; it wanted to ignore that it was the source of this impact as much as the public authority found in their campaign for the preservation of the environment one of the justifications of its existence. But one might also note and emphasize that, all the same, Venice had a unique aspect: that of a human community aware very early in its life of the effect that its historical survival could have on the order of its ecosystem and which, as such, took responsibility through its failures and successes for the conservation of that order. One might note, finally, that the story continues. The Venetian community still fears the rising waters, and the pharaonic efforts still undertaken today in the mouths of harbors, with huge resources, take over and improve upon the formulae with which, for a time, the Venetians in the Middle Ages experimented. In the 15th century, the flooding of crates was undertaken to restrict the flow of water in the Malamocco inlet in the hope of reinvigorating the San Nicolò inlet and to fight against its blockage by silt.⁶² The project of today is the prevention of *aqua alta* through the use of movable doors that thereby prevent the flooding of the mouth of the port. Elsewhere in the lagoon, the danger has changed its face. Siltation is no longer a threat; rather, it is the movement of water, due to the rapid movement of boats, that is attacking, eating away, and eroding shorelines and *barene*. Thus work continues and risks multiply as humans increasingly impact the ecosystem. The conclusion is obvious. In a disenchanted world, even if the Venetian community thinks less and less that it is living in a shelter established by the providence of God, it continues to consider how irreducibly, despite technological advances, it is necessary for its history to tie itself to that of its environment.

⁶² Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque salse*, 1:356 ff.

POLITICS AND CONSTITUTION

Alfredo Viggiano

Introduction

The historiographical question concerning the nature of the political constitution of the Venetian Republic—from the time that Republic still existed, to after its fall in 1797, until today—seems to have progressed towards and, in some ways, entangled itself in a conundrum. On the one hand, Venetian history is narrated as the progressive construction of the exclusive power of an oligarchy that monopolized the highest political offices, occupied the state's most important ecclesiastical benefices, impeded any form of “modernization” in the administrative apparatus, and, through the work of its institutions and legislations, created a diaphragm that obstructed any form of integration between the subjects of the *terraferma* and those of Venice's maritime empire. The black legend that took shape beginning in the early 19th century regarding the tyrannical character of the Venetian model fed on stereotypes regarding the republican power system that had already been elaborated during the 17th and 18th centuries by both internal and external observers.¹ On the other hand, there were others who insisted—we might call this the “golden” legend—on the innate wisdom of the Venetian constitution, the “mixed state” par excellence, and on its “uniqueness” and “originality.” It was the republican experience which, from the 15th century to 1797, saw no regime change, recognized no external power—neither pope nor emperor—as sovereign and superior, and was thus wholly unique with respect to the contemporary history of any other Italian state.

Such paradigms and models, at times intellectually refined and at times oversimplified and popularized, were destined to characterize the historiographical debate for many years. The period following the Second World War represents a decisive turning point in this “history of history.”

¹ Mario Infelise, “Venezia e il suo passato: Storie miti ‘fole,’” in Mario Isnenghi and Stuart Woolf, eds., *Storia di Venezia: L'Ottocento e il Novecento* (Rome, 2002), pp. 967–88; Claudio Povolo, “The Creation of Venetian Historiography,” in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 491–519.

This crucial renovation in Venetian historical studies was promoted by a young generation of Italian scholars educated in the oppressive years of the fascist dictatorship, together with researchers trained in American universities, often by German professors who had emigrated for political, religious, or racial reasons from the violence of Hitler's regime, and finally by the great intellectual stature of Fredric Lane. Venice and Florence became the cities of choice for a series of projects of economic, social, and politico-constitutional history that asked new questions and freed themselves from traditional categories. This was true above all for studies regarding Venice and the Veneto, which were known for their strongly parochial character and closure to methodological novelty. This newfound vitality was further animated in many respects by the climate of the "cold war" and the division of the geo-political map into two great blocs. Ideology certainly did not distort the profile of the most serious and innovative investigations of political and constitutional history, and actually lent them a special vigor—from those of Nicolai Rubinstein to Felix Gilbert, Gaetano Cozzi to William Bouwsma. But it forced them to proceed along the lines of clear dichotomies: authority versus law, despotism against liberty, autonomy against submission.² The question of the origins of "civic liberties" as well as that of republican civic identity and its moments of crisis and affirmation thus served a functional purpose in the pursuit of a genealogy of democratic and liberal modernity.

With the end of that world and that historiographical season, work in more recent years has been characterized by an explosion of research in multiple directions (and Venetian history is certainly not alone in this respect). Political and institutional histories have been touched in their own peculiar way by the crisis of the hermeneutical paradigms that had previously held sway. Yet it would be wrong to interpret this loss of a center as reflecting an irreversible crisis. Rather, I would prefer to accentuate the aspects of originality and creativity of the numerous studies published beginning in the 1990s.

I shall attempt here to present a summary of the principal moments of Venetian political and constitutional history from the beginning of the 15th century to the end of the Republic in 1797 by emphasizing lines of research and working hypotheses that have emerged in the confrontation between the central points of the "classical" historiography between the

² James S. Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 58/1 (1986), 42–94.

1950s and 1980s—the form of institutions, their development, their conscious dialectic, the formation of personnel, republican ideology—and the most recent proposals.

Among the latter, I would like to immediately underline the following as central to the pages that follow:

1) The specific attention to the stability and metamorphoses of the idiom—and idioms—of “republican patriotism,” through a reconsideration of the hypotheses of Pocock, Skinner, and Koselleck, but with greater attention lent to the specific political junctures, and to the consideration of the relationship between the pragmatic and quotidian elements of political action, the instilling of a sense of duty to office and service to the nation, and forms of ideological adhesion to the dominant model.³

2) The study of the history of Venice and its political class as a site of complex mediations between external and internal, between the affirmation of an “anthropological” difference between the inhabitants of the *terraferma* and the maritime colonies, on the one hand, and the *mésalliances* and hybridizations on the other. The construction of the state never led to an entity established once and for all, but must be interpreted rather as a reality undergoing continual modifications. It is interesting to note how the old formula of the Venetian state as regulated by *pacta* stipulated between the capital and the subject provinces has been overtaken by the proposal to read the history of this long relationship according to the model of empire—a dynamic tension between a centripetal and centrifugal center and the agitated provinces.⁴

3) The attention to specific forms of political communication that could be instruments of legitimation and de-legitimation of individuals and families. Keeping state secrets—the decisions made in the councils—constituted in Venice, as elsewhere, the central moment in constructing the image of power. The salvation of the Republic was entrusted to a group of individuals, detached from the rest of the population, who acted as oracles or as gods for the protection of the city. Publicizing delicate affairs of state not only constituted a breach of the vaunted impermeability of the

³ Martin van Geldern and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage* (Cambridge, 2002); Elena Fasano Guarini, Renzo Sabatini, and Marco Natalizi, *Repubblicanesimo e Repubbliche nell'Europa di Antico Regime* (Milan, 2007).

⁴ Monique O' Connell, *The Man of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore, 2009); Mario Infelise and Anastasia Stouraiti, eds., *Venezia e la guerra di Morea. Guerra, politica e cultura alla fine del '600* (Milan, 2005).

sovereign body but also put its “sacral” foundations in doubt, promoted a secularization of the political sphere through the formation of a still very rudimentary “public opinion,” enlarged the sphere of knowledge and sociability, and favored new modes of participating in political conflict and adhering to the same for individuals and segments of the population which had until then been excluded. The Interdict affair was most significant in this transformation.⁵

Certainly, a natural inclination for curiosity and a taste for gossip reinforced such tensions. But the conflict between publicity and secrecy characterized the emergence of new forms of political participation/consensus, in which new protagonists appeared as mediators between the different spheres of power and knowledge both inside and outside the city: gazetteers, adventurers, and travelers who transcended the categories within the set division of distinct and separate classes of traditional society.⁶

I aim to provide some indications as to the ways in which these diverse levels of the construction of politics became intertwined in three eras of Venetian history. The first, running from the beginning of the 15th century up to the Italian wars (the 1530s), can be interpreted as a phase of intense experimentation. The law and its interpretation, as applied by magistracies born in the medieval city-state, played a fundamental role in the relations within a political class that was still a work in progress, as well as between this class and the centers of the *stato da terra* and *stato da mar* of recent acquisition. The Italian wars and the Venice’s political and military defeat would offer the chance for a first rethinking of the criteria of legitimation which, until that time, had been considered vital. The role of the magistrates of the *Avogaria* appears crucial for understanding the complex transformations to which we have alluded.

The second phase was inaugurated by the Council of Trent and continued into the early 17th century. This period witnessed a deepening of the divisions within the nobility that had already become manifest by the late 15th century. In the long existence of the Baroque state, the relationship between the civil and ecclesiastical spheres acquired decisive importance. The Council of Trent and the marginalization of the Venetian state in an international context would impose new forms of discipline and new manifestations of conformism; but it would also nurture a widespread

⁵ Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007).

⁶ Mario Infelise, *Prima dei giornali. Alle origini della pubblica informazione* (Rome-Bari, 2005).

unease in Venice and its territories which could even find violent forms of expression. The Interdict dispute would offer a part of the nobility the opportunity to imagine new forms of adherence to the republican constitution by means of an interesting reinvention of tradition.

In my third and conclusive point, dealing with the 18th-century reforms, I shall pose several questions pertaining to the relationship between modernization of the state and conservation of traditional modes of political organization, the role of new technicians and functionaries gifted with particular forms of expertise, and the last forms assumed by the republican myth.

I. *The 15th Century and the "Mixed" State: Mediations and Conflicts*

It was during the 15th century that Venice solidified and extended its control over the so-called *stato da mar*—Candia (Crete), the Ionian islands, Cyprus—and definitively cast its shadow over the Po Valley and the Italian peninsula in general, occupying Padua, Verona, Vicenza, Treviso, the Friuli, and finally Brescia and Bergamo. In the first half of the century, for the Venetian political class, the question of whether to opt for mainland or maritime expansion was still undecided; would they conserve and strengthen the power of the merchants, or allow the members of the ruling class to become great landowners? This was a debate, exemplified by the contrast between the doges Tommaso and Francesco Mocenigo, which would deeply mark Venetian history.⁷

It is interesting to note in this context the role played by the magistracy of the *Avogaria di Comun*. Since it is indicative of the functioning mechanics of the Venetian constitution, we must briefly pause to discuss it. Marin Sanudo, who along with Girolamo Priuli was the most important diarist of early 16th-century Venice, composed the *De origine situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae* [*On the origin, site and magistrates of the city of Venice*],⁸ which constitutes the first complete description of the different components of the republican constitutional system. The principal responsibility of the *Avogaria*, it is affirmed, is that of "observing (defending and enforcing) the *leze*." From distant, undefined, and mythical origins to the

⁷ See Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*, vol. 1: *Dalla guerra di Chioggia al 1517*, Storia d'Italia, 12/1 (Turin, 1997).

⁸ Marin Sanudo, *Ambrosini e origine situ et magistratibus urbis venetae, ovvero La città di Venezia (1493–1500)*, ed. Angela Caracciolo Aricò (Milan, 1980), pp. 113–14.

initial and elementary duty of controlling the law that had been entrusted to these magistrates, many other responsibilities would subsequently be added over the course of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Sanudo recounts the procedures, already quite formalized, for their interventions. The college of the three *avogadori* could *intromettere* [introduce an appeal] into the government council which seemed most suitable to the typology of the case: the *Quarantia civile* or the *Quarantia criminale*—courts of justice composed of 40 nobles each, destined during the course of the 15th century to become state's highest courts of appeal; the Senate or *Consiglio de' Pregadi*—the principal Venetian legislative organ at the center of the production of norms regarding foreign and domestic policy, civil, and military; the *Minor Consiglio*—a restricted and elite body represented by the doge's councilors, six nobles nominated by the Senate; or the *Maggior Consiglio*—composed, instead, of all the nobles who had reached their majority. To introduce the discussion of a controversial case in one or the other of these sites of power did not constitute an indifferent or merely technical choice. The choice of whether to debate among an elite group of wise fathers of the *patria* or, rather, in a plenary assembly of all the components of the ruling class a case of the corruption of a magistrate or the presumed arbitrariness of a rector's verdict, to intervene in the proceedings of the attribution of an ecclesiastical benefice, or in the criteria of admission to the nobility, to judge as formally or substantially unconstitutional a decree of the *Serenissima Signoria*, or of any other sovereign institution: this was already in and of itself a political decision. It meant opting for publicity and civic debate in the decision-making process instead of secrecy; preferring the vertical communication of political "news" among the roughly 2500 members of the patriciate to the *arcana imperii*, the application of a sort of "reason of state" deposited in a restricted nucleus of oracles of the law.

The history of these magistrates might be used as a reasonable measure of changes in the constitution and within the patrician class, and it was precisely in the 15th century that the role of this magistracy took center stage in the political and constitutional history of Venice. The demographic growth of the patriciate and the new demands of government for the *stato da terra* and *da mar* would hand the *Avogaria* new responsibilities and jurisdiction with respect to those it had originally held.⁹ Decrees of the

⁹ Regarding the repression of crime within the city and the typologies of crimes, see Guido Ruggiero, *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1980).

Senate or sovereign letters signed by ducal councilors, sentences passed by the plethora of republican institutions with their seat in the capital, pronouncements or acts of government of the Venetian rectors in the *terraferma* or envoys in the colonies of the *stato da mar*: every type of act produced in the course of the activities of government, from the least important magistracy to the Doge himself, no matter how solemn or banal it might have been, could be brought by appeal before the *Avogaria*.

From the most formalized notions of civil law to particular local customs, a plurality of juridical conceptions and forms were continually discussed, specified, and adapted to specific and circumscribed situations. It was through the hermeneutical activity of the *Avogaria* and their intervention in concrete conflicts that one could glimpse a material constitution, a complex of rules and norms meant to regulate the forms of social life. The basic lexicon of republican mythology, already under construction during the 15th century, found continuous validation in the requirements of office: prudence, fundamental equality among all patricians, internal peace, and respect for the autonomies of the subjects of the "Dominion." A glance at several cases—obviously without claims to completeness—can help us better understand the tension between legality and subjective interests, between the liberty of the individual and the pressures exerted by the patrician clans, and between the normative/juridical system of the capital and those in force in the cities of the *terraferma*, Dalmatia, and the Mediterranean islands under Venetian rule. In 1439, the *avogadore* Luca Tron requested that the components of the *Pregadi* enforce a letter emanated by the *Maggior Consiglio* in 1403, affirming that Venetian nobles could not receive gifts, pensions, or salaries from other "Dominions" or communities. It was necessary to underline that old decree to prevent Folco Contarini from taking the post of unspecified embassy to which he had been appointed. Previously, in fact, the latter had for years served the duke of Mantua, living at his court and receiving from that ruler generous compensation.¹⁰

In many other cases, we can see an analogous mechanism in which a norm apparently buried in the archives of the Venetian chancellery is re-exhumed for a specific purpose. In one instance, the "city laws" (*ordines Venetiarum*) previously reaffirmed in 1309 had been disregarded in a marriage case that opposed Maria Contarini and Azzone Trevisan. The case was being appealed to the *Quarantia* in regard to the first sentence

¹⁰ ASV, *Avogaria di comun*, reg. 3648 (II), c.44r, 18/5/1439.

emitted by the *Giudici di Petizion*. The presidents of that prestigious court of appeals had established that a member of the same tribunal, Davide Contarini, could participate in the vote. But this decision, according to the members of the *Avogaria*, contradicted the letter of that archaic decree which ordered that judges or officials belonging to the families of women involved in cases discussed in the jurisdictional seats to which they had been nominated could not collaborate in “resolving those disputes.”¹¹

The ever-increasing interventions of the *Avogaria* in the years 1440–60 represent a true turning point in Venetian political history. The apex of the constitutional system—the doge, the *Provveditori di San Marco*, the ducal councilors, the *Savi del Consiglio*—thus came to be subjected to a form of continuous supervision. In 1453, for example, the *avogadori* were able to block an order from the Doge to the *Giudici di Petizion*. The highest representative of the republican constitution had tried with that act to impede the execution of a sentence in the dispute between the brothers Antonio and Tommaso Malpiero. A chapter of the *Promissione*, the collection of norms accumulated over time that delineated the rights and responsibilities of the doge, ordered him to collaborate and favor the execution of the sentences he was called to countersign, and not to prolong the course of justice.¹²

We have mentioned the defense of the law. *Leze* might at first appear a term both clear and neutral, but if we stop to consider the ways in which it was translated, the multiple realities this term might encompass (i.e., collections of statutes of the subject cities, customary laws, and a generally regulative idea of justice, charged with ethical and religious meanings) and the close identification of *leze* and the defense of legality with the republican constitution, that first and oversimplified perception is replaced by the awareness of a far more complex system.

Colleges of jurists from the principal cities of the *terraferma*; Cretan nobles' families detaining seigniorial powers and capabilities of territorial control (the *feudati*), and the family clans with seigniorial powers in the *Patria* of the Friuli; notaries and syndics of the lesser communities of the *stato da terra* and *stato da mar*; rectors and students of the University of Padua; the Jewish communities—there was no juridical subject possessing some degree of authority whose complaints for the interruption of a

¹¹ Ibid., reg. 3648 (I), c.63r, 21/III/1432.

¹² Ibid., reg. 3650 (I), c.72v, 11.VI.1453.

time-honored prerogative did not make their way to Venice. On the one hand, we run into decisions that seem determined by a will to defend the autonomies and privileges of public bodies and particular institutions. On the other, numerous other verdicts appear motivated by the intention to affirm choices of public order in function with the interests of the capital. Thus, the sentences of the *Avogaria* mix authority and legality, suspension of the system of constitutional guarantees/state of exception and the daily administrative routine, and thus connote the particular flexibility of the Venetian political system.

This bipolar oscillation between the “*mano regia*” and an inclination towards mediation, a trait also evidenced by other contemporary state realities, led multiple subjects to put forward their disputes and represent their rights precisely because of the substantial unpredictability of action on the part of the central power. Reading the interventions of the *avogadori* allows us to watch in great detail the law in action, via the criteria of inclusion and exclusion in the constitutional system for specific subjects: in a word, the procedures of *legitimation*. Normative uncertainty naturally brought about appeals for the recognition of specific rights, promoting successive adjustments, important hybridizations between juridical cultures, the formation of compromise, and the search for equilibrium between the city on the lagoon and local centers. Let us choose an example from the bountiful extant documentation: in 1492 the *avogadore* Pietro Balbi received a complaint put forward by the men of the rural community of San Felice, in the district of Treviso. A mandate of the Venetian governor of Treviso—which in their opinion constituted an infraction of the “customs” they had enjoyed since time immemorial regarding the pasturing of animals on common lands—ought to have been considered as violating the law, honesty and equity (*jus, honestas, et equitatem*). It was this tripartite and stereotypical formula that often accompanied the motivations that the very same *avogadori* attached to their decisions from the 14th century on (together with other associated *contra Deum, jus et justitiam* or *contra Deum, justitiam, et equitatem*). Here we must note the appropriation by legal procurators of local interests of the lexicon of Venetian authority. Thus we see a fusion of a generic and universalistic idiom, juridical and abstract, with contingent interests, and which was equally respected by components of the Venetian councils and the well-off inhabitants of the countryside of Treviso.

By the last decade of the 15th century and the first of the 16th, many observers of Venetian politics were already underlining the emergence of

a crypto-oligarchy. This was constituted by the Procurators of St Mark, the Council of Ten and its *Zonta*, and the *Savi del Consiglio*.¹³ It was among this restricted group of individuals, often rotated from one of these organisms to another, that choices were made on the strategies to adopt in foreign and domestic policy, the instruments suitable for maintaining public order and administering justice, and fiscal policy and tax collection.

Domenico Morosini, a protagonist in Venetian political life in the 1480s and 1490s, pointed to the fracture that had been created within the governing class in his pamphlet entitled *De bene instituta re publica*. The classic interpretation of this process provided by Gaetano Cozzi demonstrates not only how those magistracies in charge of political legitimization, like the *Avogaria*, lost power and authority but how other prestigious bodies that played a fundamental role in the construction of the 15th-century state and in the expansion of the *terraferma* and the *Dominio da mar* would also see their prerogatives come under increasing scrutiny.¹⁴ The Senate, as one member of that important council would write in 1526, was convoked "in order to bore the senators with the reading of letters of no value." In 1529, another senator quipped that "when the bell of the *Pregadi* rings, the Council should come together to make important decisions instead of doing nothing, such as happens at present."¹⁵ The accusations we have just read are likely excessive and ought be read more as a symptom of the growing unease in a part of the patriciate vented through the bitter tones of criticism, rather than as an objective description of the spleen-like components of an institution on the brink of obsolescence. In those same years, Donato Giannotti, a Florentine partisan of republican government in exile in Venice, would write in his dialogue entitled *Delle Repubbliche de' Viniziani* that "in this council all the important questions of the Republic are dealt with: the decision to go to war, peace treaties,

¹³ On the increase of the Council of Ten's responsibilities following the territorial expansion of republican power, see Michael Knapton, "Il Consiglio dei X nel governo della Terraferma: un'ipotesi interpretativa per il secondo Quattrocento," in Amelio Tagliaferri, ed., *Atti del Convegno Venezia e la Terraferma attraverso le relazioni dei Rettori* (Milan, 1981), pp. 235–60.

¹⁴ Gaetano Cozzi, "Domenico Morosini e il *De bene instituta re publica*," *Studi veneziani* 12 (1970), 436–38.

¹⁵ Gaetano Cozzi, "Venezia dal Rinascimento all'età barocca," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 6 (1994): *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, p. 14.

truces, pacts, and the modes of collecting money.”¹⁶ It must be remembered that the Senate, or *Consiglio dei Pregadi*, was made up of 120 permanent members. Moreover, the principal exponents of the Venetian myth in the 16th century, men such as Gasparo Contarini and Paolo Paruta, would describe it as an organ of mediation between the “democratic” and disorderly *Maggior Consiglio*, controlled in their eyes by plebeian nobility subject to corruption, and the authoritarian decisiveness of the Council of Ten. The Senate, then, was the anchor of republican wisdom and prudence.

These images of a perfectly balanced power system rehashed and developed aspects of the encomiastic and celebratory literature of the myth of Venice which had already been elaborated during the 15th century by humanist politicians such as Paolo Morosini, Lauro Querini, and Bernardo Giustinian.¹⁷ If we are to gain a better understanding of the contradiction made explicit here between those who viewed the Senate as useless and those instead who saw it as crucial, as well as of the contrast between “broad” and “narrow” government, we must return to the general political picture and consequences on the Venetian constitution of the turning point of the “Italians wars” in the early 16th century.

In 1509, a coalition comprising the main Italian and European powers together with the papacy inflicted upon the Venetian army one of the most humiliating defeats in its entire history. The defeat of Agnadello represents a turning point in Venetian history. It would put an end to Venetian expansionist aims in the direction of “Lombardy.” The slow reconquest of the state in the century’s second decade would force the Venetian ruling class to rethink the foundations of its own legitimacy and intervene radically in two fundamental sectors of princely power: fiscal administration and justice. Responses to the crisis were articulated with a vast array of political proposals and debates on the Venetian constitution which, nevertheless, failed to produce any relevant changes.

¹⁶ Donato Giannotti, “Della Repubblica de’ Viniziani,” in *Opere politiche*, vol. 1, ed. Furio Diaz (Milan, 1974), p. 89.

¹⁷ On these aspects, see Franco Gaeta, “Venezia da ‘Stato misto’ ad aristocrazia ‘esemplare,’” in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds, *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 437–94; Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in a Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, N.J., 1986); Patricia Labalme, *Bernardo Giustiniani. A Venetian of the Quattrocento* (Princeton, N.J., 1969); and Angelo Ventura, “Scrittori politici e scritture di governo,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 513–63.

However, as we shall see, the push to create more specialized and efficient magistracies would enjoy a certain success. The 1520s and 1530s represent a change of direction, with respect to the constitutional experimentation of the 15th century, because the two main sources of tension that had previously characterized it were overcome: that internal to the privileged class of patricians, and that concerning the government of the state.¹⁸ It is to this dual development that we must now turn.

The first question, regarding the internal conflicts and adjustments in the Venetian political class, may be glimpsed from a variety of perspectives. Of these, the appearance of new forms of classification for political actors appears particularly relevant. While such new classifications enriched political discourse, at the same time they risked compromising the logic of the republican system as a compact and tranquil political universe. These were definitions and attributions of etiquette that we would not find in the previously cited "official" works but which appear continually in the daily lexicon of constitutional conflict in the accounts of diarists. Among these, the contrast between "*vecchi*" and "*giovani*" stands out. This dichotomy was only superficially linked to a question of age; it was, rather, a mode of defining character and psychological inclinations: disregard for rules both written and unwritten, shocking transgressions, displays of intemperance, and an inclination toward physical violence. In the early 16th century, that dichotomy drew a line between legitimate and illegitimate behavior and, thus, defined the boundaries of political manners. But new valence would soon be added to complicate this original meaning.

New *Case* and old *Case*: it was this antithesis that attempted to explain the superiority of certain family groups, connected with the mythical foundation of the city, to others which had been integrated only later into the ruling class; *Case grandi* and *Case piccole*. This dichotomy was based on the dual elements of accumulated wealth and the capacity to control decision-making procedures through the strength of the family name and a network of friends. These terms indicate groups of individuals and alliances between families whose boundaries were quite fluid and uncertain. They were defined gradually during the course of conflicts over title and election to public office and through debates over the criteria for

¹⁸ Giuseppe Del Torre, *Venezia e la Terraferma dopo la guerra di Cambrai. Fiscalità e amministrazione (1515–1530)* (Milan, 1986).

determining precedence in civic rituals.¹⁹ Such labels thus began to take part in republican political discourse, and we can see them in the summaries of discussions and conflicts that took place in the Senate or *Maggior Consiglio* during the 16th century. Rather than defining the boundaries of *partiti* or *fazioni* or the construction of a solid identity, these in fact only temporarily frame individuals or families. These were labels and fragile identities that the actors in Venetian political life could appropriate to legitimate themselves, to define their particular rights or to stigmatize the role of adversaries and limit their prerogatives. In the sole years of the Interdict (the jurisdictional conflict between Venice and the papacy at the beginning of the 17th century), the old labels of *vecchi* and *giovani* assumed new meanings: the denomination *vecchi* came to indicate the defenders of the overall neutrality of the Republic and the Italian and European geopolitical map as designed by the Habsburgs and the Roman curia. The *giovani*, in contrast, designed the contours of a group of political actors that intended to make Venice again a candidate for a leading role in Mediterranean and continental politics, as the central link in an anti-Habsburg and anti-Roman coalition of powers.²⁰

In his extremely dense *Diari*—daily annotations of all that was said and done in the city between 1496 and 1533—Marin Sanudo precisely transcribed the summaries of current debates in the Senate, *Maggior Consiglio*, and Council of Ten. In reading Sanudo's pages we can vividly grasp the voice and physiognomies of the protagonists of Venetian politics; the deeper reasons for differences of opinion—if, how, and where to erect a ghetto for the Jews; whether to favor an alliance with France or the Empire or, rather, advocate equidistant neutrality. At the same time, we are able to understand, better than during any other time in Venetian history, how “emotions” defined the role of politics and the idioms of power.²¹ Indeed, archival sources appear reticent or silent on this topic. The archive's construction participated in the conservation of the memory of the myth of Venice: the synthetic registration by notaries of the different positions within the great magistracies contributed consciously to the transmission of an image of the well-ordered republic; dissenting

¹⁹ Matteo Casini, *I gesti del Principe. La festa politica a Firenze e Venezia in età rinascimentale* (Venice, 1996); Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, N.J., 1981).

²⁰ Fundamental are William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty* (Berkeley, 1968); and Gaetano Cozzi, *Il Doge Nicolò Contarini. Ricerche sul patriziato veneziano all'inizio del Seicento* (Venice-Rome, 1968).

²¹ Serena Ferente, “Storici ed emozioni,” *Storica* 43/45 (2009), 371–92.

opinions are only briefly mentioned; and the precise accounts of the votes for and against the proposals put forward certify the success of an elegant institutional minuet. The personalized versions of 15th- and 16th-century diarists restore to us the fullness and variety of the interest and positions in play.

Of particular interest is the question of what we might refer to as “republican patriotism,” and of which we can identify two main trajectories. On the one hand, there developed a model of a “written republicanism,” distinguished by a loyalty to the letter of the constitution of the *padri* (fathers).²² Old normative legislation and archaic sentences of the medieval courts were dusted off and reintegrated into contemporary political communication in order to justify proposals of law and legitimize their authors. During the second half of the 15th century, this tendency to create a coherent primitive republicanism was already evident in the proclamations that accompanied the publication of laws by the Council of Ten in matters of decorum and urban security (the regulation of the role of the *Capitano del Consiglio* and the police that served him) and electoral systems (the procedures determined by placing a *ballotta* for elections to office so as to avoid fraud). The *boni et antiqui mores* [the wise and ancient customs] evoked by such laws worked toward the construction of the *fundamenta status nostri* [the foundations of our state]. It was during the lively debates that occurred within the Council of Ten or the *Maggior Consiglio* that the lexicon of a coherent power was forged. In the mid-15th century, the search for roots of Venice’s origins in the distant past aimed to legitimize the Venetian political class. Genealogical research and chronicles recounting family histories, coherent and placid, would accompany the process of mythological construction of the elite as part of an operation that was consciously executed. The intentional erasure of the darker pages of this history, the ambiguities that very same tradition had passed on regarding the “sacred” and uncontaminated origins of the city, the stories of internal conflict between the 9th and 12th centuries, and in the very act which baptized the patriciate—the *serrata* [closing] of the *Maggior Consiglio*—would characterize the construction of a collective identity.

²² John G.A. Pocock’s categories can be usefully transferred onto the terrain of republican history. See his *The Ancient Constitution and Feudal Law. A study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (1957; Cambridge 2004).

We have ample evidence of this particular intuition/translation on the terrain of the political and institutional conflicts between the late 15th and early 16th centuries. We see it, for example, in the 1499 trial conducted against the *capitano generale da mar* [commander of the naval fleet], Antonio Grimani.²³ The holder of highest military office in the Venetian navy was accused of being responsible, because of his pusillanimity, for the shameful defeat of the Venetians by the Ottomans at Zonchio in the waters of Lepanto.

For those who charged him—patricians of modest fortune serving as rectors or ships' masters in the maritime colonies—Grimani had to be subjected to the judgment of the Venetian plenary assembly of the *Maggior Consiglio*. State treason demanded a trial in which the deciding court was composed of all the members of the republican body. To justify such a claim, Grimani's accusers referred to a law of the late 13th century that mandated decapitation for captains and fleet commanders found guilty of the crime of cowardice.

There was thus defined a *habitus* we might define "*veterorepubblicano*," which sought legitimacy in the history of the ancient constitution; sentences, laws, and customs of the 13th and 14th centuries could serve to provide stability to a system in crisis for reasons both internal and external. This definition of an identity would soon clash with another political style, a different way of representing, on the part of individuals and houses, one's belonging to the *civitas*, and distinguished by the attempt to identify Venice as an "*altera Roma*" [another Rome].²⁴

This divergent style is well represented by the figure of Doge Andrea Gritti (1523–38) and his plan for a *Renovatio urbis* that marked his *dogado*. For it was in these years that there clearly emerged the myth of Venice as a second Rome. From the field of artistic and architectural renewal to that of political and constitutional transformations, Venetian history seems to be characterized by a desire to imitate the great classical model. On the political side we can recognize this propensity for identification with the institution of the magistracy of the Censori, charged with supervising the correctness of electoral procedures and punishing cases of corruption

²³ Dorit Raines, *L'invention du mythe aristocratique. L'image de soi du patriciat vénitien au temps de la Sérénissime*, vol. 1 (Venice, 2006), pp. 295–97; Alfredo Viggiano, "Il processo al Capitano Generale da Mar Antonio Grimani, 'Ruina de' Christiani,' 'Rebello de' Venetiani' (1499–1500)," in Yves-Marie Bercé, ed., *Le procès politiques (XIV^e–XVII^e siècle)* (Rome, 2007), pp. 251–72.

²⁴ Manfredo Tafuri, *Venezia e il Rinascimento, Religione, Scienza, Architettura* (Turin, 1985).

with exemplary rigor.²⁵ But the failed attempt to unify the juridical system through the cancellation of Venetian particularism appears even more significant. For the first time, there was a serious discussion in Venice regarding the centrality of the old statutes passed by Jacopo Tiepolo (1231): the complexity of the world demanded radical integration with respect to the venerated corpus of the old laws of the medieval city. Gritti and the staff that collaborated in the revision would attempt to introduce in Venice the norms of Roman/Common law already in widespread use in the world of the *terraferma*. In such a way, they believed, that barrier, cultural even more than it was administrative, which separated governors and the governed might be breached.²⁶ The commission worked with alacrity in examining the centuries-long production of laws and decrees. In the end, nothing was done: traditionalist resistance and class interests proved too strong. The adoption of common law, because of its technical demands and specialization, would in fact have made necessary the creation of a class of learned experts. This sort of separate body represented a novelty which the Venetian nobles, who considered themselves oracles of the law, found intolerable.

The response to the crisis was found, rather, in the creation of new magistracies for the city and the dominions. This innovation would be determined partly by utilitarian motivations, such as widening the possibility of employment for discontented nobles, and guaranteeing protection for Venetians possessing rice fields, forests, and seigniorial jurisdictions in the *terraferma*. But the multiplication of offices also satisfied the intentions of those within the Venetian ruling class who believed that the relationship between the city and its dominions ought to be something less vague and contradictory. A thorough study of the decisions of the *Provveditori sopra Feudi*, the *Provveditori ai Beni Inculti*, and the *Provveditori ai beni comunali* (magistracies charged with controlling, respectively, feudal jurisdictions, land reclamation, and territories left to the disposition of rural communities for agricultural cultivation and the grazing of animals)²⁷ could show

²⁵ Vittorio Lazzarini, "L'obbligo di assumere pubblici uffici nelle antiche leggi veneziane," *Archivio Veneto*, 5th ser., 19 (1936), 184–98, Donald E. Queller, *The Venetian Patriciate. Reality versus Myth* (Urbana-Chicago, 1986); Dorit Raines, "Office Seeking, the Broglio and the Pocket *Political Guidebooks* in Cinquecento and Seicento Venice," *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 22 (1991), 137–94.

²⁶ Gaetano Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia e stati italiani. Politica e giustizia dal secolo XVI al secolo XVIII* (Turin, 1982), pp. 295–310.

²⁷ *Guida generali degli Archivi di Stato italiani*, vol. 4 of *Archivio di Stato di Venezia* (Rome, 1994), pp. 962–65.

the ways in which demands for protection and the defense of privilege were reconciled, or clashed with the demands of control and discipline on the part of the center.

Already during the 15th century, the lexicon of power employed in the new legislation was coherently utilizing essential labels—*dominium, re publica*—to describe a vast territorial space over which the *Serenissima Signoria* could exercise its powers of command.²⁸ The history of the different representations of the *dominii* in the rooms of the Doge's Palace between the 15th and 16th centuries might also be interpreted as the passage from a military/defensive perception of the *stato da terra* to a more overall evaluation of the tensions that marked relations between the capital and the jurisdictions of the *dominii*. In 1460, the Council of Ten had asked the rectors to send to Venice detailed maps of the territories subject to their jurisdiction. Mountains, rivers, communities: the maps were to describe the state as coherent whole, visible from the center. The miniaturizing of spaces as demanded by the creation of maps was to transmit to those in power an illusion of control over cities, seigniorial and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and distant lands which, in reality, enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy. But above all, the detailed knowledge of the topography of the dominions responded to the demand of military control of the borders. During the 16th century, the extraordinary collection of maps of the Veneto provinces designed by Cristoforo Sorte would add the note of aesthetic delight and the classicizing pleasure of vision to the cognitive demands of "reason of state."²⁹ Interestingly, during the more than two centuries that separate Sorte's achievement from the fall of the Republic, there were no further plans for collections analogous to those just cited. Was this a renunciation on the part of the Venetians to represent their government as the "center" in which differences were reconciled? Was it an intuition of the irreducible political, cultural, and/or religious diversity of the territorial components? Tensions within the patriciate and the creation of new magistracies can better explain the tension between the lack of a will to centralize, and the intensification of various forms of control.

It must immediately be noted that, during the 16th century, Venice, that city of liberty and pleasure, was also theater to the enforcement of the forms of social discipline and control with regard to customs, gestures,

²⁸ Alberto Tenenti, *Stato: un'idea, una logica. Dal Comune italiano all'assolutismo francese* (Bologna, 1987), pp. 85–88.

²⁹ Roberto Almagià, *Cristoforo Sorte, il primo grande cartografo e topografo della Repubblica di Venezia*, in *Id. Scritti geografici* (Rome, 1961), pp. 613–18.

and types of behavior that have already been studied in other Italian and European contexts.³⁰ A quick glance at the legislation reveals a crack-down regarding the observance of sumptuary laws,³¹ the harsh repression of sodomy,³² and the formation of new magistracies dedicated to specific fields of inquiry and subject to the Council of Ten, of which they were de facto appendages: see the *Provveditori sopra monasteri*, instituted to obviate recurring episodes of scandalous behavior in sacred places.³³ It was also at this juncture that the *Inquisitori sopra la propalazione dei segreti* (1539)—were established (soon giving way to the magistracy of the *Inquisitori di stato*), responsible for enforcing the obligation to absolute secrecy regarding the debates that took place in the sovereign councils.

New worries over social control are evident in the creation of the *Esecutori contro la Bestemmia* (1537):³⁴ the Council of Ten ordered this new magistrate to apply older laws that had been disregarded. The three *Esecutori* could proceed with a firm hand, torturing the accused and working in secret. The crime of blasphemy had, in fact, brought the divine wrath upon the city of St Mark: in order to regain God's benevolence—"the protection and grace of the Divine Majesty for our state"—it was necessary to prosecute them vigorously. A later law of the Ten in 1539, demonstrating the magistracy's success in uprooting blasphemy, decreed the extension of these norms to "dens" and "brothels" which, in addition to these offenses to God, gave rise to "other enormous and detestable sins, along with gambling" with the consequent ruin of both people and their finances.³⁵ In 1541, the jurisdiction of the *Esecutori* was further augmented by another law that censured the "extreme insolence" of the Venetian youth: from the moment forward, anyone who dared "to extract weapons of any type without reverence for the Lord God" in sacred places, churches, or

³⁰ On the theme of social discipline in the early modern period, the bibliography is vast indeed. Important for its methodological indications and valid for the Roman Catholic world as well that of the Reformed Churches is the analysis of Paolo Prodi, *Una storia della giustizia: Dal pluralismo dei fori al moderno dualismo fra coscienza e diritto* (Bologna, 2000).

³¹ Federica Ambrosini, "Cerimonie, feste, lusso," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 5 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 597–80.

³² Gabriele Martini, *Il "vitio nefando" nella Venezia del Seicento: Aspetti sociali e repressione di giustizia* (Rome, 1988).

³³ This theme has recently been investigated by Jutta G. Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago/London, 1999).

³⁴ Gaetano Cozzi, "Religione, moralità e giustizia a Venezia: vicende degli Esecutori contro la Bestemmia (secc. XVI–XVIII)," in Cozzi, *La società veneta e il suo diritto. Saggi su questioni matrimoniali, giustizia penale, politica del diritto* (Venice, 2000), pp. 65–148.

³⁵ ASV, *Esecutori contro la Bestemmia*, reg. 54, c.3v–4r, 26 aprile 1539.

monasteries would be condemned to five years exile from the city.³⁶ In a move that would anticipate and accompany the “clericalizzazione” (an increased identification with the values and interests of the Church) of society in the age of the Counter-Reformation, the *Esecutori* were made responsible for ensuring printers and booksellers possessed the “licenses” of the Council of Ten so as to prevent the circulation of too many books “of a dishonest and evil nature.”³⁷ It was at this moment that the question of the relationship between the closed class of the nobility and that of the “*cives*,” the citizens, would find an enduring solution.

During the 15th century, various laws of the Council of Ten had established norms and provided for specific forms of control over the criteria for admission to the ducal chancellery—the “heart,” it was said, of the Venetian state—and the privileged role the *cives* were supposed to occupy within it. These laws foresaw the institution of specialized, loyal personnel whose members, while not coming from within the political elite, were supposed to be closely linked to it. It was from this primitive distinction that an enduring constitutional-linguistic invention would take shape: the class of the so-called *cittadini originari*, a socio-professional group, both prestigious and privileged, placed between the “*popolo*” and the patriciate. The political rhetoric of the Myth of Venice (see particularly the important contribution of Gasparo Contarini)³⁸ represented the *cives originarii* as the middle element, equidistant from lively world of the guilds and trades and the closed exclusivity of the upper class. For this ability to foster communication between the two potentially antagonistic poles of society and power, the function of these citizens was to guarantee the peace and tranquility of the state. In reality, the models of collective self-representation elaborated by components of this “middle” class in civic rituals and the forms of deference and respect demanded among its members rather suggest an imitation of the rituals and forms of legitimation of the nobility, devoid of any plebeian or popular valence. This was a complex process of differentiation known in part to historians: matrimonial politics³⁹ and the acquisition of particular signs of distinction through the control and possession of literary-humanistic and scientific culture (possession of a large

³⁶ Ibid., reg. 54, c.33v, 21 dicembre 1541.

³⁷ Ibid. For the legislative provisions, see reg. 54, cc. 36v–37r and cc. 37v–38r, 12 febbraio 1543 and 7 settembre 1543.

³⁸ Gigliola Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della cristianità* (Florence, 1988).

³⁹ Anna Bellavitis, *Identité, mariage, mobilité sociale: citoyennes et citoyens à Venise au XVI^e siècle* (Rome, 2001).

library, epistolary relations with humanists during the 15th and 16th centuries, with the *Studio* in Padua, and with news agents in later periods)⁴⁰ constituted the principal aspects of the first phase of development of a great state bureaucracy.

It has been argued how, in a little less than a century, between the 1470s and 1569, there was enacted a sort of *serrata cittadinesca*, a definitive limitation of access to the class of *cives* following the model of the better-known *serrata* of the *Maggior Consiglio*, thanks to which the distribution of "superior" offices would thereafter be consigned to a limited number of families.⁴¹ Writing in the mid-18th century, the historian Vettor Sandi tells us how an illuminated governing class intended "to separate a body of civil persons from the rest of the Venetian subjects with the title of *cittadini originari*," keeping them "ever-purged and as a reserve of resources to be called upon in the hour of public need."⁴² Analyzing legislation and the duties conferred over time upon members of the ducal chancellery, Sandi underlined a sociologically relevant and functional aspect, namely, that those great "officials" played a fundamental role in the construction and conservation of the republican state; but he attributed less importance to the political tensions and constitutional crises in which the *cives*-chancellors had been decisive.

Two elements ought to be studied with particular attention. The first regards the politico-constitutional aspect we have already discussed. The ducal chancellors in fact contributed to widening the gap that divided parts of the nobility. The chancellors were called to preserve the cultural memory of the Republic's power. Charged with defending the "secret of state" and sacred body of laws conserved in the archives of the Ten and the Senate (to which they alone had access), the chancellors utilized this prerogative to reinforce their links with some families of the "great" nobility. Members of the lesser nobility were instead excluded from this form of political knowledge and communication that was at once a practical, daily necessity and a metaphorical projection of power relations. The legitimacy and fortunes of the chancellors were defined in a complex relationship of dependence/independence towards the patriciate.

⁴⁰ Mary E. Neff, *Chancellery Secretaries in Venetian Politics and Society, 1480–1533* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1985); Giuseppe Trebbi, "La cancelleria veneta nei secoli XVI–XVII," *Annali della fondazione Luigi Einaudi* 14 (1980), 65–125; Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: i cittadini originari (sec. XVI–XVIII)* (Venice, 1993).

⁴¹ Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati*, pp. 65–68.

⁴² Vettor Sandi, *Principi di storia civile della Repubblica di Venezia dalla sua fondazione sino all'anno di n.s 1700*, vol. 1, part 3 (Venice, 1755–73), pp. 345–46.

The difficulty in comprehending these dynamics would be further accentuated in moments of crisis: it was no coincidence that, in the difficult years around the turn of the 17th century, we witness the spread of the myth of the Chancellor as indefatigable servant of the *patria*, willing to sacrifice his health and his life.⁴³

The second aspect I wish to underline is that of the endogenous tensions between the higher echelons of the bureaucracy, the high functionaries of the state who organized the bureaucracy of the great constitutional bodies, and the minor “officials” who labored daily in the single magistracies.

It is opportune to remember that the Venetian “bureaucratic” system functioned on two levels: the first, constituted substantially by members of the Ducal Chancellery, was occupied by civil servants attached to the great political councils; the second, clearly separated from the first, was made up of a plethora of secretaries, notaries, and others who in each single magistracy carried out the tasks of conserving the official acts and transmitting orders and mandates. The *Cinque Savi alla mercanzia* and the *Provveditori alle rason vecchie*, the *Auditori novi* and the *Provveditori di comun*, the *Signori di notte* and the *Officiali al cattaver*, the *Provveditori alle pompe* and the *Savi alle decime*: all these courts, dedicated to everything from controlling the movement of merchandise, appeals in civil affairs, and the maintenance of public order and urban hygiene to the observance of sumptuary norms or the conservation and verification of fiscal transactions—were run by the limited staff in question. Venetian nobles, elected to office for a period of 18 or 24 months, would have had little impact on the ordinary mechanisms by which these offices functioned. The attention of researchers should thus turn to the physiognomies of the technicians who served under the patricians: it was they who ensured the Weberian continuity of bureaucratic activity. Yet studies dedicated to this important sector of government service have been overshadowed by interest for the activity of the chancellors. The reasons for this lack of attention are in part due to a sort of historiographical “block” and, at the same time, to more prosaic archival causes. The motivation we might define as historiographical is owed to the diffusion of the republican myth, which has tended to idolize the role of the noble “oracle” of the law and marginalize the cosmos of the technicians and functionaries.

The practical reason resides rather in the modes of conferring offices within the different ministries: all mid- and low-level bureaucratic offices

⁴³ Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia*, pp. 172–73.

were, in fact, subject to the rule of the sale of offices.⁴⁴ The norms that were meant to be applied appear formally irreprehensible and precise, but the dynamic universe that managed the letting and sub-letting of offices, regulated exchanges, and carried out “institutionalized” vendettas devoid of any physical violence easily escaped what tenuous disciplinary control there was.

It is not possible to draw a meaningful comparison between the unstable careers of those subjects who occupied “minor” office, often components of small family clans who hoped to gain access to the golden circle of the Ducal Chancellery,⁴⁵ and the great dynasties of that same Chancellery which, by the early 17th century, already disposed of family trees modeled on those of the nobility. They remained two distinct and parallel worlds, and passage between the two was not permitted.

II. *Justice, Violence, and Politics in the 16th and 17th Centuries: The Council of Trent and the Counter-Reformation State*

The Spanish historian Josè Antonio Maravall dedicated many an interesting page to the loss of individual and collective identity, the breakdown of the traditional bonds of class and social group, and the accentuation of feelings of disquiet expressed in forms of mobility that authorities countered with new techniques of definition, closure, and repression.⁴⁶ From Catalonia to Naples, Flanders to Portugal, the Habsburg Empire was forced to confront separatist movements, popular revolts, and demands for autonomy;⁴⁷ while an increase in rural unrest and noble feuding and an ever-widening gap between rich and poor were all phenomena that shook the great French monarchy and brought about a new configuration of power relations within its borders.⁴⁸ “To withstand this complex, multi-faceted and

⁴⁴ The only work on the phenomenon in the Venice, and which is only an introduction and proposal for future research, is Roland Mousnier, “Les trafic des offices à Venise,” in Mousnier, *La plume, le faucille et le marteau: institutions et société en France, du Moyen Age à la Révolution* (Paris, 1970), pp. 387–95.

⁴⁵ Andrea Zannini, “La logica della distinzione. I Borgheselao, una casata di Terraferma al servizio della Serenissima (XVI–XVIII sec.),” *Ateneo Veneto* 193 (2006), 63–126.

⁴⁶ José Antonio Maravall, *La società del barocco: analisi di una struttura storica* (Bologna, 1985).

⁴⁷ The classic work on this is John H. Elliot, *The Revolt of Catalans. A Study in the Decline of Spain* (Cambridge, 1963).

⁴⁸ For France, see the recent synthesis of Fanny Cosandey and Robert Descimon, *L'absolutisme in France. Histoire et historiographie* (Paris, 2002).

unstable web of opposition and protest,” wrote Maravall, “states found themselves having to satisfy two necessities: reinforce the material means of repression and provide themselves with tools for the penetration of consciences and psychological control, which, by favoring the process of integration and combatting disorder and violence” might assure their control of the situation.⁴⁹

The Venetian state never faced revolts that aimed to overthrow the foundation of the Prince’s power: the spread of noble banditry in the *terraferma* provinces never threatened the legitimacy of the governing class and was even used by a part of that group to consolidate its own superior pacifying function.⁵⁰ The years following the disastrous defeat at Agnadello would see numerous cities in the *stato da terra* ready to submit freely to Charles V and, thus, be forever liberated from the hated government of the “three-thousand tyrants,” as Padua’s ambassador to the emperor phrased it.⁵¹ But from the 1530s forward, the *terraferma* patriicians would not allow their lack of love for Venice to be expressed with such a clamor, now content to press for the validation of their old jurisdictional autonomies.

As for the capital, after the deposition of Doge Francesco Foscari in 1457, Venice would never again run the risk of a change in constitutional form from republic to principality.⁵² The figure of the Doge came to be articulated, particularly in the first half of the 17th century, through decidedly baroque debates: to what point might Venice, precisely by virtue of that singular institutional figure inherited from the Byzantine world, be defined without contradiction as a “Republic of Princes?”⁵³ Were not several Venetian maritime possessions, such as Cyprus and Candia, referred to as “Kingdoms”? If so, what then was the proper title for he who, at the head of a Republic, ruled over a “Kingdom”? Rhetorical exercises of this sort aimed to justify criteria for precedence at international assemblies such as peace negotiations and the coronation of emperors and popes.

⁴⁹ Maravall, *La società del barocco*, pp. 79–80.

⁵⁰ For a general picture, see Claudio Povolo, *L'intrigo dell'onore. Potere e istituzioni nella Repubblica di Venezia fra Cinque e Seicento* (Verona, 1996).

⁵¹ See the important pages in this regard in Angelo Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo nella società veneta del '400 e '500* (Bari-Rome, 1964); and, above all, Innocenzo Cervelli, *Machiavelli e la crisi dello stato veneziano* (Naples, 1974).

⁵² On the Foscari affair and its constitutional consequences, see Giuseppe Gullino, *La saga dei Foscari. Storia di un'enigma* (Verona, 2005); and, especially, Dennis Romano, *The Likeness of Venice: A Life of Doge Francesco Foscari, 1357–1457* (New Haven, Conn., 2007).

⁵³ G. Cozzi, “Venezia, una Repubblica di Principi?” *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 11 (1986), 139–57.

But the internal consequences of such long-winded discussions never amounted to much.

Where there were real debates, and bitter ones at that, was on the subject of the Council of Ten. So much so that one could say that the variety of forms that constitutional debate had assumed during the 15th century would be reduced, in what became a sort of constitutional obsession, to a definition of the responsibilities and jurisdiction of the "terrible tribunal." The series of so-called "corrections"—in 1458 and 1582–83, 1627–28, 1667, 1671, 1761, 1774–75, and 1780 being the most important⁵⁴—serve to demonstrate that the tension between "*governo largo*" and "*governo stretto*," between an oligarchy of the *ottimati* and a control over offices exercised by members of the lesser nobility, had now become structural.

Let us try to understand if and by what means in the city of St Mark there developed a new punitive approach on the part of the Venetian ruling class with regard to typologies of crime previously unknown: the dispositions of several penal sentences determined by the Council of Ten beginning in the late 16th century clearly indicate this moment as a decisive turning point. As an example, one could cite the uncommon emphasis that accompanied the judgment passed in 1598 against Zuanne Memmo di Michele. Despite his having already received penal convictions on other occasions, he maintained "the closest relations with men of bad life, sinners, killers, and the bloodthirsty (*sanguinari*)."⁵⁵ This band of scoundrels roamed the city day and night, terrorizing inhabitants, taking every opportunity "offered to it to offend." But what appeared most serious to the Ten was the fact that Memmo, with the aid of his band of hoodlums, had come to create a sort of parody of the Venetian justice system; these episodes of violence and private interests were protected through an irreverent imitation of the primary principle of the republican order: equality. Zuanne Memmo had "constituted himself a formidable determiner of the disputes of various persons, both Christian and not, who by means of the money it behooved them to contribute to him and his satellites, they were induced to come to him, who arrogantly intervened in various affairs from which he aimed to make abominable profit."

⁵⁴ On the "corrections," see Marco Bellabarba, "Le pratiche del diritto civile: gli avvocati, le 'Correzioni' e i 'Conservatori delle leggi,'" in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 6, ed. Cozzi and Prodi, pp. 825–63; Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia*, pp. 173, 176–77, 194–212; and Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, 5 vols (Turin, 1969–90), vol. 5 (1990): *L'Italia dei Lumi*, part 2: *La Repubblica di Venezia (1761–1797)*, pp. 12–31, 174–90, 198–220.

⁵⁵ ASV, *Consiglio dei X, Criminali*, reg. 18, cc. 50r–57v. All quotations regarding the judgment against Zuanne Memmo di Michele are taken from this source.

He threatened whoever refused to submit to the resolutions sanctioned by his authority, and he presumed “to make and un-make marriages” both in the capital and in some localities of the *terraferma*. The Ten condemned him, in his absence, to perpetual exile from the entire *Dominio* and to the privation of his noble title. On the eve of the Interdict dispute to which we shall soon return, Memmo’s behavior, which seems to have encountered some favor, thus shook the foundations of the Venetian juridical system; but it also invaded areas of responsibility pertaining to ecclesiastical institutions. We might hypothesize that the “non-Christian” persons whose disputes Memmo resolved belonged to Venice’s Jewish community, protagonist in the second decade of the 17th century in a sensational trial regarding the sale of justice on the part of noble judges who manned the appeals courts of the *Quarantie*.⁵⁶

In the years between 1580 and 1620, the processes of differentiation within the patriciate accelerated: the “mixed” constitution theorized by the many authors of the republican myth in the 15th and 16th centuries was by now a mere literary fiction. The *clericalizzazione* of behavior and new rules of discipline accompanied this evolution of the internal relations of the sovereign body and gave a peculiar coloring to Venetian history in this period. If we want to grasp this decisive political turning point in all its concreteness and complexity, we must look to evidence from the justice system, and particularly to the trials that witnessed the nobility of the capital as both accusers and accused. Numerous trials conducted by the Heads of the Council of Ten attest to the overwhelming presence in components of the *Maggior Consiglio* of attitudes, gestures, and modes of expression that a long tradition had established as absolutely foreign to that group: points of honor, the spirit of vendetta, and clan and blood bonds that outweighed all other values and considerations.

On 13 August 1590, the Ten decided to prosecute Pietro Malipiero di Sebastiano.⁵⁷ The latter, having learned of the defamatory insults that a certain Bonzuanne Bernabè (a peasant who worked the lands of the Malipiero in San Stino di Livenza) had used in reference to Pietro’s cousin, threatened to kill the peasant pistol-in-hand. Bonzuanne—whom we can imagine as wealthy enough economically to bear the financial burden of a trial in the capital and, above all, as possessing a sense of personal honor

⁵⁶ Gaetano Cozzi, *Giustizia “contaminata.” Vicende giudiziarie di nobili ed ebrei nella Venezia del Seicento* (Venice, 1996).

⁵⁷ ASV, *Consiglio dei X, Criminali*, reg. 16, cc. 23r–24r.

capable of resisting the personal attacks of a nobleman—had come to Venice to depose in front of the Heads of the Ten. Fearing an inquest, Pietro Malipiero had then denounced Bonzuanne to the magistracy of the *Signori di Notte*: his worker had come to the capital for the purpose of killing him. The investigation conducted by the “Supreme Tribunal” would decree the noble’s guilt, first for his act of violence, then for his calumny. Malipiero had meanwhile fled, however, and would thus be convicted in contumacy. A similar affair of privation would involve Agostino Donà, tried during the year 1591.⁵⁸ He was the illegitimate son of one of the most prestigious members of the Venetian political class, the Knight of St Mark, Alvise Donà. Agostino, who resided for extended periods on the agricultural holdings in Piove di Sacco, had offended several public officials who had been sent by the locality’s *podestà* to notify him of developments in some ongoing civil cases. His show of hostility to authorities later manifested itself in even more egregious ways. Crossing the town on horseback, he had surrounded himself with a sizeable group of men armed with harquebuses, used “tyrannical means by demanding to be respected for his evil deeds,” and had finally blasphemed the name of God. Not only unruly or violent, Agostino was also a “tyrant” and “blasphemer,” qualities that emerged in the period’s documentation to label certain components of *terraferma* noble houses who committed crimes that jurists placed in the category of the so-called *enormia*.⁵⁹ The exemplarity of punishment, however, would clash in the above-mentioned case with the prestige of the accused’s family name, and the vaunted impersonality of the law would have to come to grips with the true balance of powers. Agostino Donà’s conviction would be little more than symbolic: two years of relegation to Zara, in Dalmatia, and a pecuniary reimbursement of the community that had unwillingly played host to his antics.

Rather than making the patriciate more compact, the inflexible affirmation of republican discipline on the part of the Council of Ten widened the fractures within it. The obligation that all Venetian noblemen observe norms of conduct provoked an interruption of the forms of political communication within that same sovereign body, the breakdown of elementary forms of institutional etiquette, of that fictive equality so important to the Venetian myth. Such were the paradoxical consequences of the

⁵⁸ ASV, *Consiglio dei X, Criminali*, reg. 16, c.62r.

⁵⁹ Mauro Vigato, “La figura del nobile ‘tiranno’ nell’età di Lorenzo Priori,” in Giovanni Chiodi and Claudio Povoletto, eds., *L’amministrazione della giustizia penale nella Repubblica di Venezia (secoli XVI–XVIII)*, vol. 2, *Retoriche, stereotipi, prassi* (Verona, 2004), pp. 495–526.

attempts at normalization that emerge in the provisions of the Council of Ten between the 16th and 17th centuries: the displays of a widespread disquiet that emerge from a glance at the court's sentences demonstrate the crumbling of the long, successful construction of the republican identity, both within and without.

It was in this sphere that a genre of self-representation wholly internal to the Venetian nobility could emerge: a politico-literary genre that would be coined with the term *antimito* [anti-myth]. With respect to Contarini's already classic codified partition in the 16th century, the authors of the *antimito* produced images of the *Serenissima's* political body which were by no means harmonious. The silhouette of the Venetian nobility was now defined by conflict and violence rather than harmony and wisdom, by the domination of money rather than the mythical equality before the law. From the exemplars of the early 17th century, often anonymous or of difficult attribution, and up to Giacomo Nani in the second half of the 18th century, it seems that a middling nobility on the road to impoverishment and excluded from the most prestigious offices tried to demonstrate through criticism the legitimacy of their function.⁶⁰ In his political essay on the aristocratic body of the Republic of Venice, Nani would conduct a sort of anatomical examination of the sovereign body along two lines of analysis: in one column there would be placed "various situations and wealth," in five classes determined by the greater or lesser wealth, and the political "situation" (chronicling rise and fall) so intimately connected to that wealth; in the other column, the "*costume morale*," or ideological choices of the different classes: the *signori*, the *buoni* (those who supported the Church and deference to Rome), the *spiriti forti-liberi* (libertines, those against Roman intervention), and the *poveri* (the poor, those who did not possess sufficient economic fortune to honorably fulfill their duties). The oligarchy and plutocracy that governed the Republic produced irreparable fractures both within the nobility and between Venice and its subject territories. A sober and frugal political class, in contrast, always willing to serve in city offices as well as in posts of the *stato da terra* and *da mar*, would have been able to guarantee the necessary mediation.

The above-mentioned literature of the *antimito* and the so-called "*guerra delle scritture*" [the written war], which saw the Republic and

⁶⁰ See Piero Del Negro, "Venezia allo specchio. La crisi delle istituzioni veneziane negli scritti del patriziato (1670–1797)," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 191 (1980), 920–26.

Roman Church face off over jurisdictional prerogatives in 1606–07, can be interpreted as two complementary responses to this crisis. For this reason, then, they ought to be considered together. Both attempt to interpret and correct the distortion of an imagined republican constitution.

At the beginning of the 17th century, Paolo Sarpi, a great thinker at the service of the Republic, and the group of *giovani* that controlled the majority of the Senate tried to redefine the character of both internal and foreign policy in Venetian politics: questioning the traditional and prudent neutrality of the Republic and trying to limit, and to sever if necessary, the bonds of loyalty and subordination vis-à-vis the Austrian Habsburgs, Spain, and the papacy. Although this moment of the *giovani* would not produce any structural change from the point of view of a history of institutions and political constitution, it must nevertheless be emphasized that the grandiose ideological side of this conflict would serve to question the forms of belonging and perceptions of identity—of family, of clan—within the Venetian patriciate, thus stripping away the façade of general unity. It is opportune to remember how, from the Venetian side, the legitimization of the conflict with the papacy was founded upon the need for a return to the purity of the original dictates of Venetian legislation. Sarpi and the most intransigent nobles in fact reclaimed a return to the legislative body of the early 15th century. The evocation of the letter of such centuries-old laws that dealt with the conferral of benefices, episcopal seats in the *dominii*, the taxation of ecclesiastical entities, and the prerogatives of civil courts over clerics who committed crimes would strengthen the foundations of this controversy from both a juridical and an ideal point of view. Just as Edward Coke devised the framework of Common Law as the foundation for the exercise of power during the conflict between the English king and Parliament in the first two decades of the 17th century, so Sarpi perfected the idea of a distinctly Venetian law.⁶¹ This alone could favor a progressive integration between the capital and its territorial state; through a new intransigence, competing interests could be reinforced and uncertainties removed. The incarceration of two ecclesiastics—a noble from Vicenza and a noble from Treviso both accused of serious crimes—

⁶¹ For the precedents, see Aldo Mazzacane, “Lo Stato e il Dominio nei giuristi veneti durante il ‘secolo della Terraferma,’” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 577–650; for Sarpi, see the fundamental edition now underway of the *Consulti*, vol. 1 (1606–09), ed. Corrado Pin; and the essays contained in Corrado Pin, ed., *Ripensando Paolo Sarpi: atti del convegno internazionale di studi nel 450° anniversario della nascita di Paolo Sarpi* (Venice, 2006).

followed by Roman threats and obligatory Venetian resistance gave way to a conflict that would be monitored with apprehension in all European capitals on the eve of the Thirty Years' War.⁶²

The spread of writings, pamphlets, and anti-Roman satire invaded the capital. But they were not limited to Venice: the cities and countryside of the *terraferma* were also called on to participate personally in the "written war" with Rome. Loyalty to the Republic versus the bond with Rome: to the themes of fiscal repartition and the administration of justice that had marked the difficult constitutional dialogue between the capital and subject provinces—between respect for and claims of autonomy, and forms of integration and participation—there was now added, and urgently, the great question of "ecclesiastical matters" (*res ecclesiae*).⁶³ During the 16th century, the greatest point of friction was represented by those members of the nobility who had shown sympathy for or adhered to the "sect of the Lutherans." Throughout that century, indeed, the papacy had continued to accuse the Venetian political class of being infested with heresy, of being observant Catholics only on the surface. A latent tension, until the outbreak of the Interdict crisis, would be ever-present in relations between the Republic and the papacy. Faced with the will of the Holy Office of the Inquisition to prosecute Venetian nobles, the city of St Mark responded by instituting the magistracy of the *Savi all'Eresia* to guarantee and protect to some extent the members of that privileged class.⁶⁴

Beginning in the 17th century—and this is a structural date—the question became even more complex due to the increasing numbers of Venetian nobles who attempted to obtain regular and secular ecclesiastical benefices within the territories of the *Serenissima*, with the risk of creating privileged territorial enclaves, veritable states within the state.⁶⁵ Republican patriotism was thus, in many cases, subordinated to loyalty to Rome. Families like the Correr and the Grimani gravitated around the papal

⁶² The episodes are recounted in an "instant book" by Paolo Sarpi, *Paolo Sarpi, Istoria dell'Interdetto*, ed. C. Pin (Padua-Conselve, 2006).

⁶³ On the origins of the question, see Giuseppe Del Torre, *Patrizi e cardinali. Venezia e le istituzioni ecclesiastiche nella prima età moderna* (Milan, 2010); for the 18th-century legislation, see particularly F. Agostini, *Istituzioni ecclesiastiche e potere politico in area veneta (1754–1866)* (Venice, 2002).

⁶⁴ Federica Ambrosini, *Storie di patrizi e di eresia nella Venezia del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1999).

⁶⁵ Antonio Mennito Ippolito, *Politica e carriere ecclesiastiche nel secolo XVII. I vescovi veneti fra Roma e Venezia* (Bologna, 1993); Anna Pizzati, *Commende e politica ecclesiastica nella Repubblica di Venezia fra '500 e '600* (Venice, 1997).

court and shifted their interests, clientele, and wealth from the ancient republican capital to the center of Christianity.

In response to the process of growing marginalization in the context of the Italian and European states, the Republic, beginning in the mid-17th century, would invent its own peculiar inclination that we might define as micro-imperialist, first during the war of Candia (1645) and subsequently in the course of the two campaigns in the Morea (1685–99 and 1714–18). In the context of Mediterranean tensions and the claim of new territories to occupy broadcast in this case as well, by a well-oiled propaganda machine, Venice put forward its candidacy as bastion of anti-Ottoman resistance, not only through the exercise of military virtues but also thanks to the protection offered to its “Greek Orthodox” subjects. From this moment forward, it would be on this complex issue of Venice’s overseas empire that a part of the republican body would attempt to reconstruct its image. Diverse and evasive identities thus reappeared within a class that even by external observers—travelers, ambassadors, polemicists/journalists, great intellectuals—was now recognized and represented as “plural” and contradictory.⁶⁶ The internal demographic crisis—from the circa 2500 members of the *Maggior Consiglio* at the outset of the 16th century to little more than 1000 at the end of the 18th century⁶⁷—would make such internal ruptures even more obvious. It was a crisis of substance as well of image that would strike, by the turn of the 18th century, perhaps even the most prestigious function of the Republic which Venetian boasted they themselves “invented”: the embassies.⁶⁸

III. *Reforms and Enlightenment: “une question mal posée”?*

It should be remembered that the two politico-intellectual attitudes I have emphasized—the intransigence of Sarpi and his supporters and the critique coming from within the system—reappeared in the second half of

⁶⁶ David Wotton, “Ulysses Bound? Venice and the Idea of Liberty from Howell to Hume,” in David Wotton, ed., *Republicanism, Liberty and Commercial Society, 1649–1776* (Stanford, 1994), pp. 341–67.

⁶⁷ Volker Hunecke, *Der venezianische Adel am Ende der Republik 1646–1797. Demographie, Familie, Haushalt* (Tübingen, 1995).

⁶⁸ Donald Queller, “The Development of Ambassadorial Relazioni,” in John R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 174–96; Andrea Zannini, “Economic and Social Aspects of the Crisis of Venetian Diplomacy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in Daniel Frigo, ed., *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 109–46.

the 18th century when the printing of several of Sarpi's writings (1760–61) accompanied in the form of ideological support the most original attempt at reform ever undertaken by the Republic.⁶⁹

The circulation of the writings of the figure who had strongly opposed Roman jurisdictional claims in the early decades of the 17th century—contesting the legitimacy of courts reserved for ecclesiastics and canceling exemptions and fiscal privileges which, during the 15th and 16th centuries, had shifted notable quantities of public wealth into the hands of religious entities—would serve in this last period of existence of the Republic to justify the creation of new magistracies—the *Deputati ad Pias Causas*, the *Provveditori sopra Monasteri*—charged with determining the extent of monastic land holdings and correcting the most obvious abuses. Through a series of legislative provisions, immediately proposed to European public opinion thanks to the circulation of gazettes that reported on these developments in detail, the Venetian government reprimanded the Counter-Reformation Church for its policies of coercion and rationalization undertaken after the Council of Trent, secularizing it, and placing it under the control of public institutions. The ultimate effectiveness of 18th-century “reforms” in ecclesiastical matters is hotly debated. Some authors have underlined the unrealistic nature of reformers’ intentions; others, however, have argued for the presence of a reforming will not unlike that of other contemporary Italian states.⁷⁰

For the latter, the reform of the regular clergy, the bitter conflict with the Jesuits, a newfound dignity on the plane of international relations, accompanied by the wisdom of ambassadors capable of intervening incisively not only with the traditional interlocutors of the *Serenissima*, such as the House of Austria and the Ottomans, but also with new powers occupying an increasingly important role in the Mediterranean (“Muscovy,” Holland, England), served to demonstrate a crucial capability of renewal within the aristocracy.⁷¹ Philosopher-*literati*, printers, and booksellers contributed decisively to “publicize” this great debate. From this angle, the Venice of Casanova and Goldoni was not only a city for tourists, the capital of the *dolce vivere* [the good life] but also a center for Italian and

⁶⁹ Mario Infelise, “Ricerche sulla fortuna editoriale di Paolo Sarpi (1619–1799),” in Pin, ed., *Ripensando Paolo Sarpi*, pp. 542–43.

⁷⁰ Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, vol. 2, *La Chiesa e la Repubblica dentro i loro limiti, 1758–1774* (Turin, 1976), pp. 101–62.

⁷¹ Giovanni Tabacco, *Andrea Tron (1712–1785) e la crisi dell'aristocrazia senatoria a Venezia* (Trieste, 1954).

European debate on the relationship between reason and tradition, civil and ecclesiastical power, tolerance and intolerance. Such tension, while not modifying the city's long-standing aristocratic constitution, nevertheless involved a part of the patriciate and modified customs and taste in the process.

The "critics," in contrast, as they tried to comprehend the extent of the sites of power affected by the presumed reforms—which included the corrective rationalization of the civil and criminal justice system, a revision of the criteria for direct taxation, the cancellation of the privileges of feudal lords, a new policy for the control and management of environmental resources, especially with regard to forests⁷²—insisted on the rhetorical and impracticable nature of those attempts. Indeed, the republican regime was, for systemic reasons, impossible to reform.⁷³ If they were truly realized, the reforms would have sanctioned the *de facto* extinction of the patrician class: the network of privileges that enveloped the Republic's political class could not be undone; the foundations of the entire structure were now far too fragile.⁷⁴ These plans for reorganizing the Venetian state have met with ambivalent views on the part of the historiography: the more negative views have characterized these reforms as a passive reproduction of what happened elsewhere and rediscovery of older, local administrative traditions, while, on the positive side, they have been seen as the fruit of the acculturation of at least a part of the patriciate and a cosmopolitan vocation that tried to establish a dialogue between the Republic and the European powers proceeding most forcefully towards constitutional transformations. In both cases, however, it was evident that such plans could not be realized.

Venetian political history of this period might be described as a hypertrophic accumulation of writings, plans, and debates destined to come to nothing. Even tensions regarding foreign policy decisions, which reacquired the important role they had enjoyed in the early 17th century in

⁷² On these themes, see Gaetano Cozzi, "Politica e diritto nei tentativi di riforma del diritto penale veneto nel Settecento," in Cozzi, *La società veneta e il suo diritto. Saggi su questioni matrimoniali, giustizia penale, politica del diritto* (Venice, 2000), pp. 311–56; and Antonio Lazzarini, *Boschi e politiche forestali. Venezia e Veneto fra Sette e Ottocento* (Milan, 2009), pp. 42–44.

⁷³ See the classic interpretation in this regard of Marino Berengo, *La società veneta alla fine del Settecento. Ricerche storiche* (Florence, 1956).

⁷⁴ On the impoverishment and progressive exclusion of an increasingly large part of the nobility, see Laura Megna, "Nobiltà e povertà. Il problema del patriziato povero nella Venezia del '700," *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti CXL* (1981–82), 319–40.

defining the internal balance of power, could not effect changes in a sick political body which had reached its terminal phase.

The figure of Andrea Tron, the *paròn*, or master, of Venetian politics for nearly 30 years (from the mid-1750s to 1780), and his “party” have been studied at length.⁷⁵ Tron, together with a significant number of Venetian patricians, considered it necessary to establish a new relationship with Austria, even to the point of evaluating the possibility of transforming the Republic into a satellite state of the Habsburg monarchy. The loss of Venice’s ancient liberty would have been compensated by the concession of economic privileges which would have designed a new role for Venice on the geo-political map of the Adriatic and the Italian hinterland. Internally, the transformation of a republican constitution characterized by an excessive number of magistracies, often in conflict between themselves, into an administrative system organized by “ministries” and “offices” would have allowed the integration of the best citizens—noble and non-noble alike.

Other political protagonists, in contrast, believed it necessary to maintain a Venetian presence in the Mediterranean sphere: control of Dalmatia, Albania, the Ionian islands Zante, Corfu, and Cephalonia constituted a necessary piece of the republican identity. Paolo Boldù, whose long career in the *stato da mar* saw him rise from minor posts to that most prestigious one of governor general of Dalmatia at the beginning of the 1780s, emphasized Venice’s role as the protector of peoples inhabiting turbulent borderlands: the “small bands” of men that populated the *Bocche di Cattaro* were thus an integral part of the Republic: they defended it and ought to be defended in turn. Between the capital city and the small territories of the *stato da mar* there existed strong analogies in both anthropological and constitutional perspectives. Common traits likened the city-state (the Republic *par excellence*) to the micro-republics scattered along the Mediterranean coastline: the virtues of sobriety, of solidarity among equals, and the collective civil and religious rites that accompanied the fundamental phases of political life—oaths, truces, military exercises. In this construction of an identity, the privileged interlocutors were the Porte and the new power of Muscovy. Not Vienna, but Constantinople and St Petersburg.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ In addition to Tabacco, *La crisi dell'aristocrazia*, see Piero Del Negro, “Introduzione,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8: (1998); *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Piero Del Negro and Paolo Preto, pp. 1–80.

⁷⁶ For the debate over the government of the maritime dominions, see Filippo M. Paladini, *Un caos che spaventa. Poteri, territori e religioni di frontiera nella Dalmazia della tarda età veneta* (Venice, 2002); and Alfredo Viggiano, *Lo specchio della Repubblica. Venezia e il governo delle Isole Ionie nel Settecento* (Verona, 1998).

In many respects, one could argue that discussions of the *mito* and *anti-mito* of Venice, which from the fall of the Republic and throughout the 19th century helped distinguish an enduring historiographical debate, found new life in the historical studies of the second half of the 20th century. Such a debate, even when it produced significant results, really served to hinder research through a sterile collection of evidence *pro* and *contra*.⁷⁷ Fields of investigation of great interest to historians studying the 15th- and 16th-century Venetian state—the structures and procedures of state offices and bureaucracies, relations among civil and ecclesiastical institutions, the languages and cultures of politics—were neglected, save a few exceptions by those working on the later 18th century. The end of the Republic aroused interest more as literary myth, almost an archetype of the idea of decadence, and its long shadow obstructed more specific and circumscribed studies. The scene was occupied almost entirely by nobles, their families, and their forms of self-representation, thus sterilizing both the historiographical debate and new research. In recent years, however, studies of Venetian political history in the 18th century have cautiously turned to the world of political technicians and functionaries, forms of recruitment and the models of their professional formation. Engineers and experts, cartographers and judges, fiscal lawyers and accountants of both the central magistracies and those operating in the *dominii*: only now do subjects such as these appear with a certain frequency in essays and monographs on the subject of Venice.⁷⁸

The study of this above-mentioned class of “civil servants,” long considered the passive underlings of an unproductive political aristocracy, will permit a more articulate evaluation of the Republic’s politics in the late 18th century. Let us consider, for example, policy regarding forests, a crucial matter from both an ecological and economic point of view;⁷⁹ or the plans for an agrarian census that occupied the Senate in the last decade of republican history;⁸⁰ or even the formation of a corps of military engineers

⁷⁷ Paolo Preto, “L’illuminismo veneto,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 1 (1976): *Dalle origini al Trecento*, pp. 1–45.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Stefano Barbacetto, “La più gelosa delle pubbliche regalie”. I “beni comunali” della Repubblica di Venezia (secc. XVI–XVIII) (Venice, 2008), pp. 98–100; and Andrea Zannini, *Il sistema di revisione contabile della Serenissima, Istituzioni, personale, procedure* (secc. XVI–XVIII) (Venice, 1994), pp. 142–49.

⁷⁹ Karl Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea. Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2009), pp. 260–72.

⁸⁰ Alfredo Viggiano, “Estimates and Cadastres in Eighteenth-Century Venice,” *Jarbuch für Europäische Verwaltung Geschichte (JEV)* 13 (2001), 92–100.

which was to renew the tools that enabled a more complete knowledge and control of the territory.⁸¹ New actors bearing technical know-how confronted and conversed with the protagonists of the French and Austrian administrative reforms. It was no coincidence that the decisions and provisions aimed at bypassing the dualisms that had long characterized Venetian history would come out of the offices of magistracies such as the *Revisori e Regolatori alle Pubbliche Entrate*, the *Consultori in Iure*—where the figure of Pietro Franceschi stood out particularly in the last decade of the Republic—and the *Deputati alla Provvisione del Denaro*, and at the hand of the technicians who constituted their backbone.⁸² From the detailed study of the daily practice of these magistracies, only apparently of secondary importance, it is possible to grasp, even if partially, the attempt to move beyond traditional paternalism through interventions that affected the fundamental economic, fiscal, and administrative structures of the relationship between capital and subject provinces.

Continuing in this direction, one might even reconsider the relationship between political culture and the politics of culture,⁸³ suspended between transformation (in the more technical and specialist sense of the formation of experts and expertise) of the functions of the older magistracies and the permanence of and modifications in representing the myth of Venice.

After the peace of Passarowitz (1718), the Venetian role in international politics appears increasingly marginal. Piero del Negro has noted, however, that beginning in the 1720s, and beneath the veil of an apparent stasis, there can be identified the first emergence of new political realities that would manifest themselves clearly only after mid-century: the establishment of blocs of power in parties or factions with coherent interests in foreign policy and other important questions, from the control of the public debt and ecclesiastical and jurisdictional policy to the management of the postal service and the concession of the salt and, above all, tobacco contracts. This attention had shed new light on the figures of Marco Foscarini, Andrea Tron, and many others, and, when these lines of research will have been thoroughly investigated, we shall be in a better

⁸¹ Calogero Farinella, *L'Accademia repubblicana. La società dei Quaranta e Anton Mario Lorgna* (Milan, 1994), pp. 30–54;

⁸² Ivana Pederzani, *Venezia e lo "Stado de terraferma." Il governo delle comunità nel territorio bergamasco* (Milan, 1992), pp. 8–11.

⁸³ On this, see Tim C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660–1789* (Oxford, 2002).

position to unravel the question of Venetian backwardness or, rather, the trends of “modernization” in the Republic’s constitutional apparatus in a comparative perspective with other contemporary states.

There was now an irreparable fracture between the mythic representations, encomiastic and celebratory literature, and use of the historical memory of the Venetian past, on the one hand, and the daily life, practices and culture of the institutions on the other—between the “culture of power and power of culture.” In 1752, Marco Foscarini, *savio del consiglio* and future doge, published *Della Letteratura veneziana*. Foscarini was familiar with some of the fundamental texts of the European Enlightenment and had read Montaigne, Locke, Pufendorf, Giannone, and Bayle, yet he maintained he had nothing to learn from the greatest authors of the republican commonwealth. In Foscarini’s eyes, it was through the study of one’s national history that one might contribute to the conservation of time-honored institutions.⁸⁴ Thus, it was necessary to revive local glories, particularly by rereading the wisdom of Paolo Sarpi, who now seemed little more than a monument. From this point of departure, Foscarini articulated the plan for a “purged (cleansed) civil history”—and “that is, that part of history that studies the laws and tries to understand the internal constitution of principalities.”⁸⁵ It was an idea that Vettor Sandi would later revive in his nine-volume *I Principi di storia civile della Repubblica di Venezia* [*The Principles of the Civil History of the Republic of Venice*], dedicated to reconstructing the legislation and history of the Venetian magistracies from their origins, published in Venice between 1755 and 1772. Sandi’s is an immobile history, devoid of conflicts; it describes a harmonious development of the powers that guaranteed the Republic’s independence. Detailed archival research and the internal history of the single institutions easily elided with the venerable formulas of political discourse.⁸⁶

The grand tradition of 18th-century “antiquarian” history and philological erudition would also contribute during the 1750s and 1760s to rewriting the “great code” of republican political discourse. Flaminio Correr, like Sandi a member of a middling noble house, published in 1749 his

⁸⁴ Piero Del Negro, “Foscarini, Marco,” in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 49 (Rome, 1997), pp. 390–95.

⁸⁵ Marco Foscarini, *Della letteratura veneziana* (Padua, 1752), pp. 324–25.

⁸⁶ On Sandi and his works, see F. Dalla Colletta, *I Principi di storia civile di Vettor Sandi. Diritto, istituzioni e storia nella Venezia di metà Settecento* (Venice, 1995). Also important are the pages of Venturi, *La Repubblica di Venezia*, pp. 3–14, 164–71.

Ecclesiae Venetae [*The Venetian Church*], a genealogical history of all the city's churches: here, "love of country" was an exaltation of the "city of Our Lady," and the same was true for the cult of St Mark, relics, and accounts of the myth of Venice's foundation. At the request of this erudite scholar, the doors of monastic and parochial archives were thrown open.⁸⁷ It should be emphasized, however, that this book so radically conservative, baroque, and aligned with the Counter-Reformation ideologically was also the most innovative methodologically: it included a critique of sources, analysis of the cultural and sacral foundations of authority, the tension between the language of religions and that of politics, and an iconological study of miraculous images. It has been written that these works constituted the expression "of a composite axis that was held together, though, by the will to reaffirm Venetian identity as aristocratic perfection and to oppose attempts to question the balance of power consecrated by history."⁸⁸

Even the principal monument of Venetian political and constitutional history of the late 18th century would not escape that vague sense of necrophilia that tinged the spirit of the time. In 1781, the Council of Ten instructed Francesco Donà, the "state historian," to compose an official history of the Republic. The official commission affirmed that the author was to work toward a "modern, political, economic and civil history," enriching it with "illustrations from ancient history" and

accompanying historical accounts with the documents that prove what occurred, their causes and effects and the maxims of Our Predecessors [taken] out of the obscurity that has enveloped them, and considering differing views of foreign writers while preserving the honor of our venerable historical memory (memorie), from which both the living and posterity shall gain useful and necessary teachings.⁸⁹

When he submitted his work in 1784, Donà underlined that "History" could only be a history of the State, and in this alone could it be critiqued: "the multiplicity and vastness and obscurity of the sources from which one must draw the necessary documents to bring forth from contradictions and doubts... the examples and true maxims of Our Fathers... modern

⁸⁷ Gino Benzoni, "La cultura," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8, ed. Del Negro and Preto, pp. 887–88.

⁸⁸ Piero Del Negro, "Proposte illuminate e conservazione nel dibattito sulla teoria e la prassi dello Stato," in *Storia della cultura veneta. Il Settecento*, vol. 5 (1986), part 2, pp. 122–43.

⁸⁹ Amelia Vianello, *Gli archivi del Consiglio dei dieci: memoria e istanze di riforma nel secondo Settecento veneziano* (Padua, 2009), p. 131.

criticism demands that history be supported by documents of state (*la diplomatica*)." He thus praised the archive as the exclusive place of repose for a state's historical memory, which was thus not to be considered as something alive and circulating in the living body of society: "If the Greeks had learned from the Egyptians among many other customs that of having the priests register events on a daily basis and protecting these registers among their most sacred things, the first histories of the Greeks would be less like fables." Unlike the imprecision of the Greeks, "the exactness of Roman histories derives from their being founded on the basis of their greatest annals which they produced and maintained with greater circumspection [than the Greeks]." "A Nation precise in the daily registering of its own internal affairs, as is the Republic, could not find a more reliable source [than such annals] from which to draw its history."

THE TERRAFERMA STATE

Michael Knapton

Introduction

a. Origins and Main Coordinates

Many of the high medieval settlers in the Venetian lagoon transferred there from mainland locations, and links with the *terraferma* were throughout an essential part of Venice's history.¹ Its early relations with mainland rulers concerned such issues as inland landholding by Venetian owners, and especially trade routes and commodity flows linking it with both the hinterland and more distant areas. Its territorial annexations in the Italian peninsula began timidly in the 14th century and expanded massively in the early 15th.

With the transition in northeast Italy from city-states towards larger territorial blocks after about 1300, Venice's previous strength in bilateral relations with numerous governments became potential weakness in facing fewer, aggressive lordly rulers, inclined to dispute its economic interests and threaten its security. Its first annexation was Treviso (1338), strategic for communications north of the lagoon. After the death of Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan, it broadened the buffer area under its control and thwarted potential aggressors, occupying Padua, Vicenza, and Verona (1404–06). By 1420 this dominion had been extended northwards and eastwards: to Rovereto, in the southern Trentino; to Belluno and Feltre; to almost all Friuli. From the 1420s to the mid-century, Venetian foreign policy was primarily committed to augmenting its Italian

¹ For this section, see Michael Knapton, "Venice and the Terraferma," in Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini, eds., *The Italian Renaissance State* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 132–55, 536–38, which covers in greater detail some issues analyzed here, but only until 1530; Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 3 (1997): *La formazione dello stato patrizio*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi, Giorgio Cracco, and Alberto Tenenti; vol. 4 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci; vol. 5 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci; and Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*, vol. 1: *Dalla guerra di Chioggia al 1517* (Turin, 1986). This essay overlaps thematically with others in the present volume, primarily those examining politics and government, crime, the economy, industry and technology. In all footnotes, the works cited refer implicitly to many others, omitted for brevity.

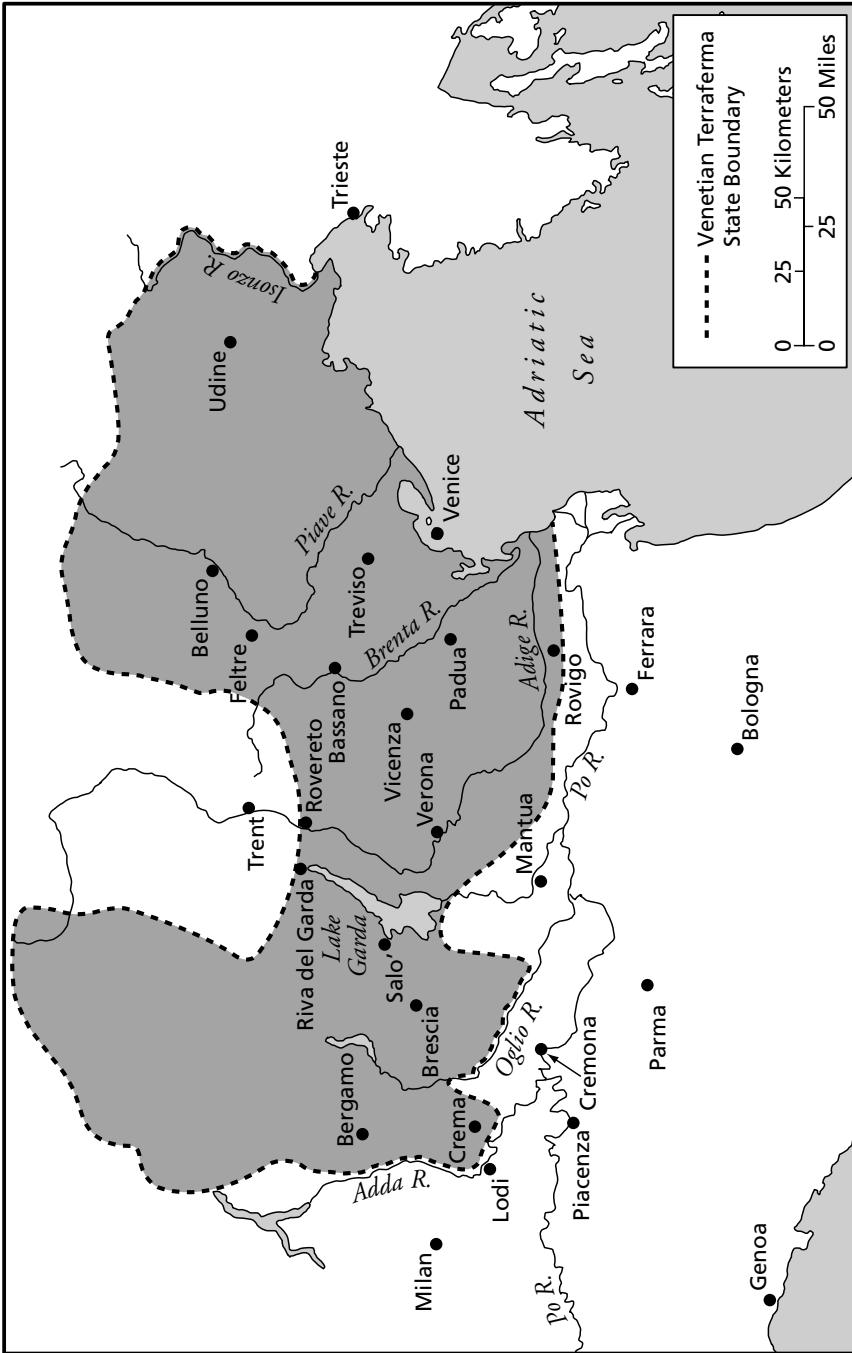
territories, especially westwards—Brescia and Bergamo (1426–28), Crema (1449)—and also in the Trentino (Riva del Garda in 1440) and towards the Romagna region (Ravenna in 1441).

Though extensive and rapid, 15th-century mainland territorial expansion was no abandonment of Venice's maritime, Mediterranean interests, nor was it the realization of a preordained plan. Rather, it was an empirical, progressive involvement, exploiting opportunities as they occurred. As in the *stato da mar*, these annexations served largely to guarantee security and support to trade flows benefitting Venice and involved significant voluntary choice by new subjects rather than mere imposition, as emphasized in the procedures solemnizing their passage under Venice. However, they did develop Venetian government awareness of the rationale and potential for territorial acquisition in Italy in the final phase of late medieval regional state formation there. Creation of the *terraferma* dominion indeed settled the political geography of most of northeast Italy, and made Venice the strongest Italian state, as confirmed by its annexation of Rovigo in 1482, despite opposition by the other Italian powers. In the Italian Wars (1494–1530), Venice initially gained further mainland territory on the western and eastern borders and in Romagna, but after defeat at Agnadello (May 1509) it temporarily lost almost all the *terraferma*. It recovered stable control there in 1516, though it suffered marginal losses—especially lands occupied since 1494—and was completely forced out of the Trentino and Romagna. Thereafter, *terraferma* borders remained substantially unchanged until 1797.

As in its sea empire, the political experience of dominion was characterized profoundly and permanently by power sharing between Venice and its subjects, with considerable delegation by the former to the latter, but also by clear separation of their spheres of influence, almost totally excluding provincial elites from mainline political activity. This choice expressed the Venetian patriciate's conviction that its corporate identity and monopoly of mainstream power preserved the nature of the state and quality of government, thus rationalizing its adaptation of a city-state mentality to the regional state.

The mainland dominion was a fairly compact area of more than 30,000 square kilometers, mostly densely populated: about 1,410,000 inhabitants in 1548 and about 2,033,000 in 1766.² Though including more rural

² Alessio Fornasin and Andrea Zannini, "Crisi e ricostruzione demografica nel Seicento Veneto," in Società Italiana di Demografia Storica, ed., *La popolazione italiana nel Seicento* (Bologna, 1999).



Map 3.1. Venice's Terraferma.

and/or feudal fringes, especially Friuli and mountain areas in general, it had experienced the economic, social, political, and cultural development of the Italian city communes and included cities large or very large by European standards: in around 1500 Verona had about 40,000 inhabitants and Brescia about 50,000. This communal experience, which had been mostly assimilated by 14th-century lordly regimes, left a lasting imprint in terms of outline similarity between territories but also of connotations specific to each, despite some 14th-century experience of amalgamation into larger units. It concerned their overall socio-economic characteristics (from Verona, vastly populous and rich, a crossroads between major north-south and east-west trade routes, to Feltre, a quiet hill town one-tenth of its size); the general evolution of public institutions, government policy, statute law, and administrative practice; the balance between urban and other jurisdictions in controlling rural areas; and the nature and composition of local elites, their degree of cohesion, and their identification with cities.³

The provinces' relationship with Venice in the mainland state introduced other variables. The circumstances of their annexation affected initial concessions to local prerogatives: Treviso, conquered very early, and Padua, taken after a bitter war to defeat its Carraresi rulers, were at a disadvantage. Both experienced relatively earlier and stronger government action from the capital, favored by proximity, which also meant the precocious pull of the Venetian market in basic foodstuffs and the greater presence there of individual Venetians' private interests, especially landholding and possession of church benefices.⁴ Measured on these same criteria and on its size, wealth, and position towards the Milanese frontier, Brescia's weight and strength in relating to Venice were quite different.⁵

³ Andrea Castagnetti and Gian Maria Varanini, eds., *Il Veneto nel medioevo. Le signorie trecentesche* (Verona, 1995); Gian Maria Varanini, *Comuni cittadini e stato regionale. Ricerche sulla Terraferma Veneta nel Quattrocento* (Verona, 1992); and Gian Maria Varanini, "L'organizzazione del distretto cittadino nell'Italia padana dei secoli XIII–XIV (Marca Trevigiana, Lombardia, Emilia)," in Giorgio Chittolini and Dietmar Willoweit, eds., *L'organizzazione del territorio in Italia e Germania: secoli XIII–XIV* (Bologna, 1994), pp. 133–233.

⁴ Giuseppe Del Torre, "Stato regionale e benefici ecclesiastici: vescovadi e canonici nella terraferma veneziana all'inizio dell'età moderna," *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 151 (1992–93), 1171–1236; Giuseppe Del Torre, *Il Trevigiano nei secoli XV e XVI. L'assetto amministrativo e il sistema fiscale* (Treviso, 1990); Michael Knapton, "I rapporti fiscali tra Venezia e la terraferma: il caso padovano nel secondo '400," *Archivio Veneto*, 5th ser., 117 (1981), 5–65; and Gian Maria Varanini, "Proprietà fondiaria e agricoltura," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4: *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 807–79.

⁵ Joanne Ferraro, *Family and Public Life in Brescia, 1580–1650* (Cambridge, 1993).

b. *Historiography*

In the early modern centuries, state-commissioned official historiographies of the Republic of Venice, like orthodox political comment, largely neglected the *terraferma* and represented the quality of mainland government and subjects' loyalty and contentment with the optimism typical of the myth of Venice.⁶ Most historical writing by *terraferma* authors primarily expressed fragmented local patriotism and, if covering the Venetian period, rarely extended beyond idealizing tributes to Venetian government and celebration of important local figures. In the 18th-century, non-official Venetian historians such as Vettor Sandi and Cristoforo Tentori devoted significant, albeit politically cautious, attention to aspects of mainland government; the Veronese noble Scipione Maffei's forthright *Consiglio politico* . . . criticized the failure to strengthen the state by bridging internal divisions, especially between Venice and the dominion, and proposed *terraferma* representation in mainline state institutions—but, very revealingly, though written in 1736 it was only published in 1797.

The Republic's demise favored more critical evaluation of its history, including the Venice-*terraferma* nexus: thus especially Pierre Daru, who accused the Venetian patriciate of subjecting, dividing and excluding the mainland aristocracy from state-building. In the mid-19th century, emerging nationalism combined with tenets of the myth to make Italian historiography concerning the Republic largely apologetic, and its relationship with the *terraferma* was presented prevalently in terms of paternalism and respect for local autonomies—for example, especially, and very influentially, Samuele Romanin. Multifarious subsequent research through to the early 20th century partly addressed that relationship too, but major progress in *terraferma* historiography came only after fascism, whose cultural ethos tended to laud Venice's general experience of statecraft. Marino Berengo's *La società veneta* . . . (1956) and Angelo Ventura's *Nobiltà e popolo* . . . (1964), respectively addressing the later 18th and the

⁶ For the period through to the early 20th century, see Gino Benzoni, "La storiografia e l'erudizione storico-antiquaria. Gli storici municipali," in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 4 (1984): *Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 67–93; Gino Benzoni, "Pensiero storico e storiografia civile," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 5 (1986): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Settecento*, part 2, pp. 71–95; Gino Benzoni, "La storiografia," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 6 (1986): *Dall'età napoleonica alla prima guerra mondiale*, pp. 597–623; and Claudio Povolo, "The Creation of Venetian Historiography," in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 491–519.

15th to 16th centuries, expressed convergent, trenchant ideas about the Republic's failure to evolve from its city-state matrix towards robust, more modern statehood by unifying Venice and the mainland—this also with a view to the region's profile in 19th-century Italian unification. Broad scope and primary attention to the Venice-*terraferma* nexus also characterized Beltrami's pioneering, quantitative studies of early modern agricultural and demographic history.⁷ Despite little immediate follow-up, research during the 1970s on Italian late medieval and early modern state organization acquired new momentum and direction, and within this trend the *terraferma* became increasingly important in Venetian historiography.

Relevant bibliography now counts several hundred titles, and this essay summarizes some of the debates opened and results achieved. While often confirming Berengo's and Ventura's far-sightedness, subsequent historiography has incorporated a more composite vision of state development, more inclined to recognize the role of institutions and bodies different from Venetian authority, and a more nuanced vision of aristocracy. Nonetheless, consensus has not swung fully towards Gaetano Cozzi's partly empathetic portrayal of the Venetian patrician state, including assimilation of "Venetian-ness" in the *terraferma* and vice-versa, which attenuated differences between them in many features of material and immaterial culture.⁸

The vigor of mainland studies and the importance of the consequent paradigm shift for Venetian history is testified by survey essays and by the forthright inclusion of the dominions in an Italian synthesis on early modern Venice; it has also helped erode historiographical commonplaces about the Republic's singularity, favoring comparison with a broader Italian and European context.⁹ Nonetheless, the dominions remain marginal

⁷ Marino Berengo, *La società veneta alla fine del Settecento. Ricerche storiche* (Florence, 1956); Angelo Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo nella società veneta del '400 e '500* (1964; Milan, 1993); and Daniele Beltrami, *La penetrazione economica dei veneziani in terraferma. Forze di lavoro e proprietà fondiaria nelle campagne venete dei secoli XVII e XVIII* (Venice, 1961).

⁸ Gaetano Cozzi, *Ambiente veneziano, ambiente veneto. Saggi su politica, società, cultura nella Repubblica di Venezia in età moderna* (Venice, 1997).

⁹ For surveys, see James Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 58/1 (1986), 43–94; Cozzi and Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia*; Michael Knapton, "'Nobiltà e popolo' e un trentennio di storiografia veneta," *Nuova Rivista Storica* 82/1 (1998), 167–92; *Intorno allo stato degli studi sulla terraferma veneta* (Verona, 2000) (= *Terra d'Este*, 17 (2000)); Giuseppe Del Torre and Alfredo Viggiano, eds., *1509–2009: L'ombra di Agnadello: Venezia e la terraferma* (Venice, 2010) (= *Ateneo Veneto*, a. 197, 3a s., 9/1 (2010)), especially the contribution by Gian Maria Varanini, "La Terraferma veneta nel Quattrocento e le tendenze recenti della storiografia," pp. 13–63. Further systematic accounts are currently being published or prepared for

in the traditionally conceived, multivolume 1990s *Storia di Venezia*, and also in much English-language Venetian historiography.¹⁰ Although analysis of the mainland dominion benefits from comparison with Venice's maritime colonies, this essay's priority is the *terraferma*, leaving readers to compare it with the sea empire.

As its development testifies, there are abundant primary sources for *terraferma* historiography, both in Venice itself—where state judicial and financial records, official correspondence etc. are more generously preserved for later than earlier centuries—and in mainland town archives and libraries.¹¹ Unsurprisingly for early modern rather than medieval sources, the vast majority of this material remains unpublished, despite significant exceptions.¹²

c. *The Title to Rule, the Language of Dominion*

The positive political clichés expressed through the “myth of Venice” were extended to its dominions via stereotype images of wise, beneficial Venetian government permeating the political language used by both Venetian and *terraferma* institutions, and also through such material symbols as the winged lion of St Mark, regularly present in urban public buildings and squares.¹³ But especially in the early years of dominion, neither Venetians nor their subjects produced abundant, explicit analysis of the *terraferma*'s standing within the state, despite reference to the matter in treatises, jurists' writings, and a variety of public and private documents.

Reticence by Venetian patricians on this subject was consistent with their buttoned-up approach to public life, but it was also convenient for all parties, considering the lasting differences between Venetian and mainland elites in general political culture. Especially initially, this margin

publication. As well as Knapton, “Venice and the *terraferma*,” see a monograph by Michael Knapton and Andrea Zannini provisionally entitled *A Republican Empire—the Venetian Mainland State, 1509–1797*, to be published by Ashgate.

¹⁰ *Storia di Venezia*, all vols; Martin and Romano, *Venice Reconsidered*, especially the introduction.

¹¹ See especially the relevant entries in *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato Italiani*, 4 vols (Rome, 1981–94), though there is also much relevant material elsewhere, especially in civic libraries.

¹² See, e.g., *Relazioni dei rettori veneti in terraferma*, ed. Istituto di Storia economica dell'Università di Trieste, 14 vols (Milan, 1972–79).

¹³ For this section, see James Grubb, *Firstborn of Venice. Vicenza in the Early Renaissance State* (Baltimore, 1988); John Law, *Venice and the Veneto* (Aldershot, 2000); and Antonio Menitti Ippolito, “La dedizione e lo stato regionale. Osservazioni sul caso Veneto,” *Archivio veneto*, 5th ser., 127 (1986), 5–30.

of ambiguity allowed differing notions about the *terraferma* state to coexist, together with diversity of language describing political relationships. The legitimacy of the Republic's annexations and subsequent exercise of government became increasingly sensitive between the mid-15th and early 16th centuries, as other Italian rulers developed propaganda hostile to Venetian "imperialism," drawing answers often couched in humanist language (e.g., Bernardo Giustinian's 1457 funeral oration for Doge Francesco Foscari).

In justifying annexation and rule of mainland provinces, tact towards subjects curbed reference to Venice's *de facto* right of conquest, and though it obtained belated imperial investiture with most *terraferma* lands in 1437, it later drew no attention to this. Preference went to such generic concepts as God's favor towards the Republic, its right to self-defense, its commitment to freedom and peace, and its altruism towards communities previously crushed by tyranny. And the most significant specific source of *de iure* sovereignty lay in subjects' spontaneous acceptance of Venetian rule, usually part of the exchange of requests by new subjects and concessions by Venice, whose broader tone was that of a pact, although negotiated between parties of disparate status. Though many single issues named in these pacts were soon superseded, they maintained lasting symbolic value.

New, extensive territorial power in Italy was one of the factors behind the transition from 1423 onwards in Venetian official language, from reference to the state as a whole as *commune*, towards *dominium*, or *signoria* in Italian—words expressing a principle of authority, the political body exercising it, and also the territory concerned (meanings also conveyed by the vernacular *imperio* and Latin *imperium*). But none of these terms assimilated *terraferma* subjects as participants in the Venetian political order or the authority with which it was invested, and they themselves made no request for representation in mainline Venetian government. Both they and Venetians might use the same political metaphors (parents/children, patrons/clients, head/members of the same body), but in the 15th century, a mainland city would call itself *civitas*, meaning a political body with its own laws, authority, and jurisdiction over a *districtus*, while Venetian government language did not necessarily consider *civitas* as implying such rights. Moreover, neither this terminology nor political practice signified any meaningful perception of the mainland provinces as a common entity by virtue of subjection to the Republic. There was a lasting carry-through from each territory's specific experience of government and politics into overwhelmingly one-to-one relationships with

Venice, only partly balanced by the slow accumulation of Venetian laws and policy directives concerning the whole *terraferma*.

From Annexation to the Italian Wars, c.1400–1509

a. *Venetian Officials in the Mainland, Authority in Venice*

Direct Venetian government of the mainland was chiefly the responsibility of patrician officials, sent to 11 principal urban governorships and several smaller towns, some largely separate from dependence on bigger cities' jurisdiction over *contadi* (e.g., Bassano).¹⁴ These teams of officials comprised one or two governors with broad responsibility, from civil to military, from judicial to executive and administrative; one or two treasurers in charge of the Venetian exchequer; and a few castellans bereft of jurisdictional powers. They were assisted by a limited number of governors' judges, chancellors and police, exchequer staff, minor castellans and garrison troops, most of them either mainland subjects or non-patrician Venetians. In the more prestigious governorships (Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, and Bergamo), responsibility was shared between a *podestà* with primarily civil authority and a captain mainly concerned with the exchequer, defense, and the *contado*. Patrician governors of the main cities were important political figures, such posts significant in their *cursus honorum*, but their terms in office were brief, and many had neither specific aptitude nor career specialization in *terraferma* posts.

This scant presence of ordinary patrician functionaries in the mainland was sporadically and temporarily increased by extraordinary officials, mostly patricians, sent from Venice with a variety of mandates—among them the *Sindici Inquisitori*, periodically despatched to investigate, judge, and report on matters concerning justice and good government. Security alerts and army mobilization saw the deployment of various grades of patrician commissioner (*provveditore*), the most senior of whom—*provveditori generali*—outranked ordinary governors, while financial stringency could stimulate the despatch of officials to inspect and galvanize the exchequers.

In the 15th century, government by authority in the capital, which was partly feeling its way and not always familiar with *terraferma* issues, was

¹⁴ Gian Maria Varanini, "Gli ufficiali veneziani nella Terraferma veneta quattrocentesca," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, ser. 4, Quaderni, 1 (1997), 155–80.

selective and light, overall.¹⁵ An increase in central government activity due to its extension to new territory and subjects was evident for the Senate, whose registers of ordinary deliberations separated in 1440 into series eloquently entitled *terra* and *mar*, and there was gradual, empirical accumulation of *terraferma* competence by the Council of Ten, while judicial appeals from the dominions influenced the cloning of the Forty (*Quarantia*) into two and then three courts (1441, 1493). Some magistracies already competent for Venice developed significant mainland business, and there were rare new bodies with solely mainland duties, like the *Provveditori sopra le camere di terraferma*, set over provincial exchequers in 1449.

b. *Terraferma Institutions and Politics*

Both central authority in Venice and patrician governors in the dominion had no other option than extensive collaboration with local elites and institutions.¹⁶ The delegation to the latter of vast responsibility for government, also visible in the numerical imbalance on the ground between Venetian and local officials, made patrician governors' actions a point of intersection and mediation.

The institutions and figures exercising political power and roles in local government of the mainland may be summarily indicated in partly overlapping categories: aristocratic civic councils, generally revamped after 14th-century decline under lordly rulers; numerous executive, judicial, and administrative bodies depending on them or linked to them; legal professionals, especially judges and notaries; civic bodies concerned with social issues, such as hospitals (with only a shadowy city council in Treviso, the big Battuti hospital there was more important than similar institutions elsewhere, as a bastion of urban élite power and symbol of civic identity);¹⁷ rural communities, the capillary cell of all rural government;

¹⁵ Alfredo Viggiano, "Il Dominio da terra: politica e istituzioni," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4: *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 529–75; Alfredo Viggiano, *Governanti e governati. Legittimità del potere ed esercizio dell'autorità sovrana nello Stato veneto della prima età modern* (Treviso, 1993).

¹⁶ For this section, see the studies cited in notes 13–15; also Claudio Povolo, "Centro e periferia nella Repubblica di Venezia. Un profilo," in Giorgio Chittolini, Anthony Molho, and Pierangelo Schiera, eds., *Origini dello Stato. Processi di formazione statale in Italia fra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna, 1994), pp. 207–21; Claudio Povolo and Sergio Zamperetti, eds., *Comunità del passato* (Vicenza, 1985) (= *Annali Veneti*, 1 (1984)); and Sergio Zamperetti, *I piccoli principi. Signorie locali, feudi e comunità soggette nello Stato regionale veneto dall'espansione territoriale ai primi decenni del '600* (Treviso, 1991).

¹⁷ David D'Andrea, *Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy. The Hospital of Treviso, 1400–1530* (Rochester, 2007).

holders of rural jurisdictions more or less independent of and/or antagonistic to urban authority, including lords and feudatories, valley or mountain communities (e.g., the valleys north of Bergamo and Brescia)—all these more thickly present in mountain areas in general and in Friuli, where Venice inherited a feudal Parliament; higher-level *contado* representative institutions—*corpi territoriali*—in explicit competition with urban authority, which mostly first emerged between the late 15th and mid-16th century.

Between them, all these local power-holders coped with the great majority of government, producing norms, dispensing justice, and handling taxation, public finance, and a myriad of other administrative tasks. The existence of a Venetian higher authority to invoke stimulated them to seek to alter existing balances of power between them, especially the extent of cities' control over their *contadi*, though Venetian 15th-century decisions mostly confirmed pre-existing urban jurisdiction, particularly strong in the Padovano, Vicentino, Veronese, and Bresciano.

By the 15th century, the Venetian patriciate was tightly defined, but *terraferma* urban political elites had a looser, more composite collective identity: prevalently aristocratic, but including newer families; mainly city-dwelling, primarily land-owning, active in honored military and civil professions (especially those connected with the law), but with no preclusion of wealth acquired through mercantile or manufacturing activity; strongly linked to power-holding via civic institutions, which indeed they dominated and with whose dignity they identified, as symbolized materially by civic buildings such as those built or revamped by Palladio in 16th-century Vicenza; also prone to express their family prestige in such forms as urban palaces, villas and funerary monuments.

Mainland aristocratic elites' political horizons changed sharply with passage under Venice. The fairly clean power split between spheres of Venetian and local government and their exclusion from the Venetian patriciate—with rare exceptions such as some of the Savorgnan, Friulan feudatories made patricians in 1385 as part of pre-conquest Venetian diplomacy—downgraded them to a provincial sphere of power-holding. They had limited opportunities to serve the Republic in a broader dimension: very occasionally in diplomacy, a few as judges flanking patrician *terraferma* governors, some in army service and administration, and little else; only a few pursued careers serving other rulers. Nonetheless, the overall tone of their relations with Venice was mostly fairly harmonious, with a strong element of mutual *laissez-faire*, especially once past early 15th-century uncertainty over the Venetian regime's solidity.

In the 1509 crisis of control over the mainland, however, chafing at Venetian authority was evident in all these elites.¹⁸ Hopes for greater local autonomy and gratification in serving other rulers married with the need to reconcile advancing armed enemies, in the absence of reliable Venetian defense, and to maintain local pre-eminence, thus orienting many mainland aristocrats towards interest in a change of regime—though the new, temporary rulers generally sharply disappointed them. The Agnadello crisis also revealed raw tension in *terraferma* society in general: especially the loyalty to Venice shown by significant parts of the urban *popolo* and of the rural population was linked with resentment of the local aristocracy's pre-eminence. Venice took advantage of such support short-term, but after the emergency its political choice could only be to resume its priority relationship in government with the civic aristocracy.

Historians no longer credit Ventura's hypothesis that Venetian authority pressed for "aristocratic closure" of these civic elites via similar mechanisms to those defining the capital's patriciate: smaller and more tightly regulated councils, their membership determined by co-optation or inherited right and anyway denied to the low-born.¹⁹ Change in these terms did develop gradually and spontaneously, with the general slowing of social turnover, but despite periodic disputes—over demands for access to civic bodies by newer, so-called *popolari* families and infighting for ranking within the civic aristocracies—such turnover did not cease, assisted by natural wastage. In the long term, both the internal hierarchy and the very composition of urban elites could change considerably. Especially in Friuli and the Bergamasco, disputes ran deeper: profound factional loyalties carried earlier political clichés of identification and rivalry through into the Venetian period.²⁰ Local elites' behavior there in the aftermath of Agnadello—especially the "mad blood stirring" into generalized violence in Friuli in 1511—demonstrates how seriously local splits endangered political stability, since factional strife comprised antagonism over loyalty to Venice and favor received from it (the opposing Friulan

¹⁸ Giuseppe Del Torre, *Venezia e la Terraferma dopo la guerra di Cambrai. Fiscalità e amministrazione (1515–1530)* (Milan, 1986); Gian Maria Varanini, "La terraferma di fronte alla sconfitta di Agnadello," in Giuseppe Gullino, ed., *L'Europa e la Serenissima: la svolta del 1509. Nel V centenario della battaglia di Agnadello* (Venice, 2011), pp. 115–61.

¹⁹ Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*; Law, *Venice and the Veneto*; Varanini, *Comuni cittadini*.

²⁰ Paolo Cavalieri, *Qui sunt guelfi et partiales nostri: Comunità, patriziato e fazioni a Bergamo tra XV e XVI secolo* (Milan, 2008); Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1993); Gian Maria Varanini, "Nelle città della Marca Trevigiana: dalle fazioni al patriziato (secoli XIII–XV)," in Marco Gentile, ed., *Guelfi e ghibellini nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Rome, 2005), pp. 563–602.

factions sympathized, respectively, with Venice and the Empire), and could also detonate rudimentary class conflict, especially peasants' resentment of their landed betters.

c. Venetian Policy Priorities

An unsurprising priority in attention and direct involvement by Venetian authority was defense organization. Hitherto used to occasional use of citizen militiamen and hired professionals when land war required forces larger than peacetime garrisons, the Republic developed a standing army which became arguably the strongest in Italy. Whereas Venetians and *mar* subjects manned the navy, command and service in this land army was the preserve of non-Venetian professionals, including an increasing proportion of *terraferma* subjects, occasionally supported by militia raised in the provinces. All major policy decisions and appointments, and general supervision of the army, were reserved to Venetian authority and Venetian-named personnel.²¹

With defense and public debt generated by it swallowing the majority of state income, equally unsurprising was the Venetian takeover of the receipt and disbursement of most mainland revenue, especially from indirect taxation, the source of the great majority of tax income.²² In peacetime in the later 15th century, the mainland's incomes more than covered its ordinary costs of government and defense, contributing about 420,000 ducats to the Republic's total revenue of about 1,150,000 ducats. But the politically delicate matters of sharing and collection of mainland direct tax were left to local bodies, which also handled much public spending and tax-raising extraneous to state finance proper. Connected with public finance, but important for the economy in general and for the symbolism of dominion, was monetary policy, over which Venice established full control, though making concessions to local identity, e.g., in minting coins for Verona with the image of its patron saint, Zeno.²³

²¹ Michael Mallett and John Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State. Venice c.1400 to 1617* (Cambridge, 1983).

²² Michael Knapton, "Guerra e finanza (1381–1508)," in Cozzi and Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia*, vol. 1, pp. 273–348; Luciano Pezzolo, *Una finanza d'ancien régime. La Repubblica veneta tra XV e XVIII secolo* (Naples, 2006); Luciano Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza nella Repubblica di Venezia fra medioevo e prima età moderna," in Rossella Cancila, ed., *Mediterraneo in armi: secc. XV–XVIII* (Palermo, 2007) (= *Quaderni—Mediterranea. Ricerche storiche* 4 (2007)), pp. 67–112.

²³ Reinhold Mueller, "L'imperialismo monetario veneziano nel Quattrocento," *Società e Storia* 8 (1980), 277–97.

In dispensing justice and in the laws it was based on, Venetian policy was complicated by the marked diversity of legal culture.²⁴ On the one hand, the Roman law-based tradition of *terraferma* statutes, sources of law in general, and judicial practice was a tradition much dependent on the legal expertise of jurists organic to local elites. On the other hand, Venice's own, separate legal and judicial tradition was characterized by the space for empirical, informal, "political" criteria of equity in judging and by assignment of judicial posts to patricians with no legal training. Though much mainland judging remained the business of local courts with local judges, the uneasy reconciliation of these two approaches was evident in the dual options of mainland governors: they used an entourage of legal professionals, judging by local law, but were also empowered to override the usual priority in sources of law. A similar contrast and compromise affected subjects' appeals to courts in the capital like the Forty: though desirable in underlining Venice's reputation for good justice, such appeals were often incompatible with defense of *terraferma* courts' prerogatives and local elites' contentment—issues to which Venetian authority was equally sensitive. Local statutory traditions continued essentially intact, with periodic renewal of statutes subject to Venetian approval, which entailed no drastic interference. Such codes were generally not significantly updated by new laws formulated by mainland legislators once under Venetian dominion, nor did they include as statutory norms the heterogeneous accumulation of Venetian laws and rulings, referred to single territories or (more rarely) to the whole mainland. Both these facts pointed towards the eventual partial superseding of statute law, though only long-term.

In economic policy, Venetian authority imposed no drastic changes and left much regulation of production and commerce to local bodies, partly owing to the strong imprint already given by treaties with the *terraferma's* previous rulers.²⁵ Directives thus formulated already favored the flow of goods to and from Venice, placed Venetian-supplied salt in mainland monopolies, and eased Venetian access to inland supplies of timber and

²⁴ Claudio Povolo, "Un sistema giuridico repubblicano: Venezia e il suo stato territoriale (secoli XV–XVIII)," in Italo Birocchi and Antonello Mattone, eds., *Il diritto patrio tra diritto comune e codificazione (secoli XVI–XIX)* (Rome, 2006), pp. 297–353; Gian Maria Varanini, "Gli statuti delle città della Terraferma veneta dall'età signorile alle riforme quattrocentesche," in Varanini, *Comuni cittadini*, pp. 3–56.

²⁵ Paola Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre of the Old World. Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland, 1400–1800* (Toronto, 2006); Paola Lanaro, *I mercati nella Repubblica Veneta. Economie cittadine e stato territoriale (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Venice, 1999).

other raw materials for ship-building. In other ways, economic policy remained *laissez-faire*, and distances, logistics, and political muscle did not allow Venice to exercise serious constraint on the central and western mainland's cities long-distance trade flows and business links, so that no integrated economic region emerged and there was little specialization of roles or hierarchical dependence on Venice. Each city jurisdiction basically maintained rules and tax tariffs protecting local trading circuits and manufacturing, also guaranteeing its Venetian exchequer's revenue. Such protection included control over the movement of locally produced food-stuffs, though with exceptions for the areas near Venice.²⁶

Ecclesiastical policy extended to the mainland the identification of the Republic's destiny and authority with divine favor, represented especially via St Mark and the Republic's attention to the church's well-being and efficacy.²⁷ Policy could include supporting projects of a primarily spiritual character but had immediate and strong political and/or material connotations where churchmen, their benefices, and property were concerned, extending to the *terraferma* contentious issues already open between Venice and the Roman Curia. This meant limiting Church courts' competence and protecting but also taxing Church property, and seeking to influence the assignment of benefices (whose revenues statewide were reckoned to total about 240,000 ducats per annum in the mid-15th century), especially via regular Senate designations for mainland bishoprics. These latter were considered to need safe nominees—where possible Venetian patricians—to guarantee good use of their spiritual authority, as a back-up to secular patrician governors.

Shifting Balances c.1509–1630

a. A Change of Venetian Perspective

Changes in government practice and political relationships altered the balance both among components of *terraferma* society and between them and Venetian authority. For the 15th century there has been debate over whether and how consciously Venetian authority, especially in the capital,

²⁶ Silvana Collodo, "Il sistema annonario delle città venete: da pubblica utilità a servizio sociale (secoli XIII–XVI)," in Centro italiano di studi di storia, e d'arte, ed *Città e servizi sociali nell'Italia dei secoli XII–XV* (Pistoia, 1990), pp. 383–415.

²⁷ Del Torre, "Stato regionale e benefici ecclesiastici."

expanded government activity.²⁸ Cautious indications of some growth have been given above, especially affecting the areas nearest Venice, but equally evident, and successful especially for more distant provinces, was local institutions' defense of their prerogatives against interference. These contrasting trends were manifest in the often contradictory handling of appeal justice, complicated by different policy priorities, rivalry, and ill-defined or overlapping competence between organs of government. This margin of uncertainty contributed considerably to the periodic despatch to Venice of mainland representatives, especially by city councils seeking to defend prerogatives, though central government sought to limit it. Linked to this was subjects' development of patronage networks for lobbying in Venice, often involving patricians who had served in dominion posts.

As already indicated, the more general crisis of the Venetian state subsequent to Agnadello had a conspicuous *terraferma* strand: the unexpected fragility of control over the mainland, difficulty of reconquest, and local elites' dubious loyalty. Venice's recovery from Agnadello as a second-rate power in a Habsburg-dominated peninsula gradually brought closer attention to mainland government in general, which was part of a slow but progressive shift of the overall political and economic balance of the whole state towards the mainland—even though it maintained a high profile in long distance maritime trade until the early 17th century and a much longer-lasting commitment to a sea empire stretching as far as the Aegean.²⁹

An absolute priority in mainland government was adapting military policy to a more secure defensive posture, primarily via progressive renewal of fortifications from Agnadello down to the building of the fortress town of Palmanova on the northeastern frontier, begun in 1593.³⁰ Though permanent armed forces, especially cavalry, had lower priority than previously, fortifications and their needs entailed higher expenditure

²⁸ Differing emphases in Grubb, *Firstborn of Venice*, and Viggiano, *Governanti e governati*.

²⁹ Though not cited repeatedly, Michael Knapton, "Tra Dominante e dominio (1517–1630)," in Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*, vol. 2: *Dal 1517 alla fine della Repubblica* (Turin, 1992), pp. 201–549, has been used for much of this third section.

³⁰ Mallett and Hale, *The Military Organization*; Luciano Pezzolo, *L'oro dello Stato. Società, finanza e fisco nella Repubblica veneta del secondo '500* (Treviso, 1990); and Peter January and Michael Knapton, "The Demands Made on Venetian Terraferma Society for Defence in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Ateneo Veneto* 194 (2007), 25–115.

and lasting mobilization especially of rural resources, also important for more systematically organized militia bodies. The high point of such mobilization of resources for defense needs was from about 1600 to 1630. Construction work was no longer a priority, but perennial security worries in the mainland peaked in wars on the *terraferma*'s frontiers: the Gradisca war of 1615–17 and the Mantuan succession war in 1629–30. Also, there was a gradual, permanent proportional increase in the contribution of mainland-levied revenues to overall state spending.

Defense preoccupations mixed with economic and environmental concerns to expand intervention by central government in control over mainland resources and vigilance on forces of nature, especially but not only in areas nearer Venice.³¹ Action concerning watercourses and marshes brought diversion of rivers to avoid silting up the Venetian lagoon, attempts to prevent them flooding, authorization and support for sometimes massive land drainage schemes, and concession of irrigation rights. Policy towards woodland aimed to reserve much timber for state arsenal use and to counter deforestation. Concern with mainland communities' common property sought to preserve public rights and current forms of use against alienation and conversion to arable. Partly akin to these preoccupations, given its implications for security, was emerging coordination of public health policy, particularly evident in the plague emergencies of 1575–77 and 1629–31. These novel trends in government action brought—especially from mid-16th century—both the creation of new central agencies with competence for solely or prevalently dominion matters and growing mainland intervention by other agencies, new and old, with a more state-wide brief: magistracies responsible for the Arsenal, therefore, as too for grain, timber and woodlands, public health, artillery, waters policy (1501), fortifications (1542), *beni inculti* or fallow land (1556/58), common property (1574).

More numerous and specialized central agencies coincided with the development of more sophisticated tools of government, as in the systematic presentation and preservation in Venice of written reports by governors returning from the dominions (introduced in 1524) and the growing use of cartography and of descriptive surveys of forests, common

³¹ Knapton, "Tra Dominante e dominio"; Karl Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea. Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2009); Raffaello Vergani, "Venezia e la Terraferma: acque, boschi, ambiente," in Del Torre and Viggiano, eds., 1509–2009. *L'ombra di Agnadello*, pp. 173–93.

property, etc.³² The growth of a non-patrician bureaucracy serving central government ran parallel to the tighter definition of criteria for its recruitment, with more extensive insistence on the requisite of Venetian citizenship—something immigrants to Venice could acquire, but which confirmed the exclusion of ordinary *terraferma* subjects.³³ Though there was greater overall mainland activity by personnel from magistracies in Venice, the meagre permanent presence of Venetian officials in the *terraferma* did not increase. Although innately pragmatic, Venetian government made increasingly frequent use from the end of the 16th century of legal opinions from consultants *in iure*, thus also developing its awareness of the implications of *terraferma* sovereignty.³⁴ Pronouncements by the most famous consultant, Paolo Sarpi (appointed in 1606), dealt too with rivers, roads, borders, rights claimed by communities, fiefs, and feudatories. Central government's formulation and assertion of its rights could indeed toughen, as happened, for example, in the decades either side of 1600 over the balance between the state's and mainland communities respective rights over communal property used by the latter.³⁵

Unsurprisingly, more intense central government action in the mainland paralleled the massive development of Venetian private interests there, especially via land purchase and reclamation, still concentrated in areas nearer the capital but gradually spreading. But there was no coherent agricultural policy. Grain needs and profit opportunities driven by demographic increase—the price revolution—stimulated extension of the acreage tilled through drainage of marshy areas and cultivation of marginal land, much more than higher productivity via better agronomic practice—irrigation, water-meadows and fodder crops, high-yielding rice fields, stock-raising to balance arable agriculture, etc.³⁶ Strong reciprocal

³² Michael Knapton, “‘Dico in scrittura . . . quello ch'a bocha ho referto.’ La trasmissione delle conoscenze di governo nelle relazioni dei rettori veneziani in *terraferma*, secoli XVI–XVII,” in Massimo Donattini, ed., *L'Italia dell'Inquisitore. Storia e geografia dell'Italia del '500 nella Descrizione di Leandro Alberti* (Bologna, 2007), pp. 531–54; Vladimiro Valerio, ed., *Cartografi veneti. Mappe, uomini e istituzioni per l'immagine e il governo del territorio* (Padua, 2007).

³³ Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: i cittadini originari (sec. XVI–XVIII)* (Venice, 1993).

³⁴ Antonella Barzazi, “I consultori ‘in iure,’” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 5: *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Settecento*, part 2, pp. 179–99.

³⁵ Stefano Barbacetto, “La più gelosa delle pubbliche regalie”: I “beni comunali” della *Repubblica veneta tra dominio della Signoria e diritti delle comunità (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Venice, 2008).

³⁶ Giorgio Borelli, ed., *Uomini e civiltà agraria in territorio veronese*, 2 vols (Verona, 1982); Salvatore Ciriaco, *Acque e agricoltura. Venezia, l'Olanda e la bonifica europea in*

influence between grain prices had probably only affected Venice and the eastern *terraferma* in the 15th century, but their alignment now covered a more extensive area.³⁷ Though government action included more systematic surveys of provincial stocks, in important fringe areas it could not control but only guess at the extent of largely illicit imports (from Spanish Lombardy to the Bergamasco) and exports (from the Venetian shores of lake Garda to the Trentino). Mainland governors were constantly concerned with food supply, especially urban; their task was complicated in the eastern provinces by grain flows towards the capital, both spontaneous and imposed, and everywhere by conflicting local interests, including landowning civic aristocracies' profit priorities, and consequent conduct of supply policy.

The creation of the *Savi alla Mercanzia* (1507) heralded more resolute trade and industry policy towards the mainland too, especially pressure to route via Venice long-distance trade flows concerning the provinces, and partly to favor the capital's textile production over the *terraferma*'s, as in silk-weaving.³⁸ Nonetheless, such pressure was only partly successful, and commerce and manufacturing in the dominion continued to evolve, overall, less in relation to state policy and more in relation to complex market forces. As well as encouraging the diversification of the wool industry, booming production and export of silk thread, and—with belated Venetian assent—the development of silk-weaving too, such forces favored the higher profile of manufacturing and trade in locations other than the major cities: primarily the valleys north of Bergamo and Brescia, the Salò Riviera, and the foothill swathe from the Vicentino (including Schio) eastwards via Bassano to the Trevigiano (including Asolo and Follina)—areas mostly characterized by advantages in the availability and/or cost of raw materials, labor, and hydraulic energy.

età moderna (Milan, 1994). More generally, Andrea Zannini, "Sempre più agricola, sempre più regionale. L'economia della Repubblica di Venezia da Agnadello al Lombardo-Veneto (1509–1817)," in Del Torre and Viggiano, eds., 1509–2009. *L'ombra di Agnadello*, pp. 137–71; Danilo Gasparini, *Serenissime campagne. Terre, contadini, paesaggi nella Terraferma veneta* (Verona, 2011).

³⁷ Francesco Vecchiato, *Pane e politica annonaria in terraferma veneta tra secolo XV e secolo XVIII (il caso di Verona)* (Verona, 1979); Gigi Corazzol, *Fitti e livelli a grano. Un aspetto del credito rurale nel Veneto del '500* (Milan, 1979).

³⁸ Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre*; Lanaro, *I mercati*; Anna Bellavitis, "Quasi-città e terre murate in area veneta: un bilancio per l'età moderna," in Elena Svalduz, ed., *L'ambizione di essere città. Piccoli, grandi centri nell'Italia rinascimentale* (Venice, 2004), pp. 97–114.

b. *Rural Elites and Urban Aristocracies*

Within provincial society, greater mobilization of rural resources for defense needs coincided with cumulatively vast citizens' purchases of peasant land, which sapped rural communities' taxable assets and generated considerable social tension.³⁹ Though the Agnadello crisis had not displaced civic aristocracies as Venice's main partners in government, this combination of circumstances was the primary stimulus to the emergence of *corpi territoriali* representing the rural communities of each province's *contado*, which mostly achieved political efficacy between the mid- and later 16th century and partly altered the balance of power between *contadi* and cities, albeit without unhinging urban jurisdiction in general.⁴⁰ They paid primary though not exclusive attention to fiscal matters and gradually obtained belated but significant changes: redistribution between town, clergy, and country of direct tax due to Venice; the cessation of taxable wealth's migration between the tax lists and burdens of these three groups as a result of changed ownership; contribution by previously exempt city-dwellers, especially to military dues extraneous to handling by state exchequers; and the passage from civic to *contado* officials of responsibility for assigning dues and collecting taxes.

Though most peasants' living standards nonetheless worsened substantially, the *corpi territoriali* both favored and benefitted from the rise of *contado* political elites based primarily in small towns. These groups' profile was partly akin to that of urban elites (some indeed migrated to cities), in the high incidence of jealous attachment to office and profit-taking from it, and in the passage of much decision-making towards smaller bodies, from single communities up to the *contado* level. But they acquired familiarity with administrative and judicial procedure, exploiting the opportunities offered especially by recourse to authority in Venice—primarily through judicial channels, but also e.g., via petitions—and cultivating relations with the patriciate.

The overall scenario was complex and partly contradictory: townscapes were more intensely imbued with civic aristocracies' individual

³⁹ Corazzol, *Fitti e livelli*.

⁴⁰ Michael Knapton, "Il Territorio Vicentino nello Stato veneto del '500 e primo '600: nuovi equilibri politici e fiscali," in Giorgio Cracco and Michael Knapton, eds., *Dentro lo "Stado italico." Venezia e la Terraferma fra Quattro e Seicento* (Trent, 1984), pp. 33–115; Sergio Zamperetti, "I 'sinedri dolosi.' La formazione e lo sviluppo dei Corpi territoriali nello Stato regionale veneto tra '500 e '600," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 99 (1987), 269–320; Alessandra Rossini, *Le campagne bresciane nel Cinquecento. Territorio, fisco, società* (Milan, 1994).

and collective self-representation, as testified by Andrea Palladio's work in Vicenza and Michele Sanmicheli's in Verona, and also by the urban academies founded from the mid-16th century, like Vicenza's *Accademia Olimpica* (1555). Citizens' ever greater share of landowning enhanced their influence over many rural communities even though, between the eastern and central *terraferma*, growing Venetian landowning shared and also competed with that influence. But cities were less dominant in the non-agricultural economy, and rural elites and *corpi territoriali* gained leverage with Venetian authority. Its attitude towards their demands was partly pragmatic, intended to preserve rural institutions' capacity to bear substantial fiscal and administrative loads, but this blended into more general political strategy, as it realized and exploited their potential as a partial counterbalance to the power of civic institutions and aristocracies.

Relations within urban elites and institutions were continually subject to underlying tensions and open disputes, especially concerning ranking within the elites and pressure for access to public life by newer, so-called *popolari* families—many connected with merchant or manufacturing wealth. However, this was not necessarily an issue for discrimination, as some aristocratic families still had such investments. Interest among elites focussed especially on election to posts of responsibility and prestige: those with important implications for control over the *contado* (especially vicars and *podestà* in charge of rural districts) and with responsibility for such matters as tax exaction and administration of pawn banks, hospitals, and grain reserves, which also afforded opportunities for illicit profit-taking.⁴¹ Though membership of civic councils retained much symbolic importance, council members' interest and involvement in routine matters declined, and such business tended to drift towards small executive bodies. Factional divisions of varying profundity were frequently visible, led in Verona, for example, by families such as the Bevilacqua and Nogarola. In various cities, moreover, some families exhibited open sympathy for foreign rulers—those in Verona for the Gonzaga of Mantua, the Empire, Spain, and France—in terms not so much of treachery as of cultivating clientage links and/or career opportunities. Others could be considered

⁴¹ Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*; Marino Berengo, "Patriziato e nobiltà: il caso veronese," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 77 (1975), 493–517; Ferraro, *Family and Public Life*; Paolo Lanaro Sartori, "L'attività di prestito dei Monti di Pietà in Terraferma veneta: legalità e illeciti tra Quattrocento e primo Seicento," *Studi Storici Luigi Simeoni* 33 (1983), 161–77; Paola Lanaro Sartori, *Un'oligarchia urbana nel Cinquecento veneto. Istituzioni, economia, società* (Turin, 1992).

closer to Venice, with similar implications for their aspirations—thus the Pompei in Verona, associated with Venetian army service.

Venetian authority intervened in matters of municipal politics and administration in a more concerted fashion towards the end of the 16th century. By formulating rules and incriminating culprits it sought to prevent and punish malpractice by mainland subjects—both citizens and *contado* inhabitants—holding local office. It tried to ease the tensions within civic elites, supporting reconciliation between opposing families and groups and also cautiously favoring turnover in access to civic office, especially if this seemed likely to produce more reliable local partners in government (it had tried with scant success to favor such turnover in the relaunching of civic public life after the Agnadello crisis).

The periodic resurfacing of the same problems needs to be related to a broader context of competition for power between Venice and the mainland elites, which became gradually more explicit in the later 16th century. This was partly evident earlier in the spheres of growing Venetian government initiative already mentioned above but was connected especially with issues of *terraferma* penal justice and law and order, which were in a critical state in the decades on either side of 1600.⁴² An important strand of violent behavior was the work of nobles, whether as outlaws at the head of roving armed bands or through habitual use of force in their ordinary urban and rural habitat. Central authority reacted increasingly drastically to such behavior, partly by seeking to reinforce policing, whose perennial weakness was demonstrated by the high proportion of sentences outlawing convicted defendants who had escaped arrest—a weakness partly sidestepped and partly compounded by greater recourse to bounties for capturing or killing outlaws. But it also introduced important procedural changes in the working of penal justice. It often authorized the use in *terraferma* governors' tribunals of the Council of Ten's trial rules, harder on the accused and less risky for damaged parties and witnesses; it diverted many delicate criminal trials away from tribunals influenced by local elites and towards reliable mainland governors' courts; and it extended punishment from individual noble criminals to their families by confiscation of their patrimony.

⁴² Claudio Povo, *L'intrigo dell'onore. Poteri e istituzioni nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Verona, 1997); *L'amministrazione della giustizia penale nella Repubblica di Venezia (secoli XVI–XVIII)*, ed. Giovanni Chiodi and Claudio Povo (Verona, 2004).

This policy sharply reduced the influence of local aristocracies on the conduct and outcome of *terraferma* criminal trials and their built-in advantage when facing non-noble subjects in the courts; it strengthened the role of Venetian authority correspondingly, and tended to make practice more uniform between the different provinces. It also seems to have set more serious limits to the overall capacity of aristocracies to preserve honor and power without coming to terms with the state as represented by Venice. Though peaceful features of *terraferma* noble families' strategies of alliances and relationships, such as marriage policy, posed Venice no intrinsic problem, the reverse side of the coin was often long-running rivalry and sometimes violent hostility. Venetian policy now cramped aristocratic preference for handling disputes between families or factions by substantially autonomous mediation or sometimes feuding, rather than via the law-courts, just as it posed or exacerbated problems in the internal cohesion of individual families, whether between branches or individual members. Similar consequences—in asserting Venetian authority and weakening urban institutions and elites—derived from other trends in the administration of justice. The increasing flow of civil appeals to Venice gradually eroded the autonomy of mainland courts, and the burgeoning activity of the judicial college of Ten (later Twenty) *Savi* of the Senate handled mainland administrative and fiscal disputes.

Venetian policy in these same decades also sought to assert more clearly expressed sovereignty over other forms of aristocratic power. A new central magistracy (1587) acquired responsibility over feudal jurisdictions, requiring systematic procedures of registration, checking, and investiture; this policy often matched pressure from enfeoffed communities for a more direct relationship with Venetian authority, especially through judicial appeals, and it was variously supported by urban institutions and *corpi territoriali* intent on limiting the prerogatives of separate jurisdictions, especially in feudal Friuli.⁴³

In the early 17th century, therefore, there were important signs of dynamism and change in the political relationship between Venice and the mainland, of initiative by Venetian authority but also by forces in provincial society. During the jurisdictional and ideological clash with the papacy in 1606–07, when Venice defied the Interdict banning religious rites, and in the following years' alternation of military scares and outright war, *terraferma* society gave significant proof of consensus towards

⁴³ Zamperetti, *I piccoli principi*.

Venice, but there were also symptoms of considerable tension. Venetian awareness of the latter motivated the despatch of various special inspectors, and after a *terraferma* tour, the *Sindici Inquisitori* in 1621 emphasized the difficulties faced by Venetian governors in asserting their authority at Verona and Brescia.⁴⁴ These difficulties were partly blamed on lack of overall cohesion in government action, with organs in the capital too ready to accept complaints against the governors; and indeed tension was evident within the Venetian patriciate over both current policy choices and general power-sharing, with direct repercussions for the *terraferma*. In the 1628 Great Council debate over whether and how to limit the Council of Ten's powers, one of the arguments for preserving the Ten's standing was the fact that divisions within the patriciate had immediate echoes in the mainland, especially in Brescia.⁴⁵

Involution or Evolution (c.1630–1797)?

a. Introduction

The great 1630 plague killed more than 20 per cent of the population in Venice and on the mainland. The last major epidemic of its kind, it was a turning point in many ways, firstly economic and demographic.⁴⁶ It more or less coincided with major structural changes in the international economy, which downgraded Venice to little more than a regional port on the edge of international trade, with obvious repercussions for export manufacturing associated with the *terraferma* urban economy. Urban population in both Venice and the *terraferma*, which had recovered fairly well from the 1576 plague, struggled to fill its gaps after 1630. In 1548, 22.5 per cent of the population in Venice and the *terraferma* lived in cities of 10,000 or more inhabitants, but in 1766 this proportion was only 16.5 per cent; *terraferma* population increased by 44 per cent between those two dates, but numbers in the larger cities were almost unchanged, with the major exception of Bergamo, atypically dynamic in trade and manufacturing. Overall balances in fact swung further: from the sea towards the mainland

⁴⁴ Leonardo Moro and Marco Giustinian, *Relazione sul dominio di terraferma*, ed. Claudio Povolo (Vicenza, 1998).

⁴⁵ Gaetano Cozzi, "Venezia nello scenario europeo (1517–1699)," in Cozzi and Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*, vol. 2, pp. 180–81.

⁴⁶ Paolo Ulvioni, *Il gran castigo di Dio. Carestia ed epidemie a Venezia e nella Terraferma 1628–1632* (Milan, 1989); Fornasin and Zannini, "Crisi e ricostruzione"; more in general, Zannini, "Sempre più agricola."

in the state as a whole, and—within the *terraferma*—away from traditionally important towns towards rural areas, more dynamic demographically and, though more selectively, also economically.

For the last decades of this period, Berengo's pioneering portrait represented the Venetian government's relationship with the *terraferma* darkly: imprisoned in antiquated and contradictory conceptual premises; just able to discuss the political present freely but incapable of adapting to it and still less of shaping it; resignedly aware of considerable gaps between itself and many mainland subjects, and between their behavior and many government policy directives; vigilant over sporadic political dissent—which included rhapsodic enthusiasm for the French Revolution, from 1787, and then for Napoleon's advancing army in 1796–97.⁴⁷

Reacting to that vision of decline, decadence, and involution, subsequent studies have given due emphasis to the circulation of Enlightened ideas in the Venetian state of the mid-18th century, though even Franco Venturi's final volume on the subject affords scant evidence that such ideas carried through into incisive government policy, and there is little disputing the overall rigidity of formal political arrangements.⁴⁸ But especially for the century or so subsequent to 1630, research coverage of many matters concerning the mainland is still spotty. As part of a wealthy, strategically sited, small state in a European scene dominated by large, aggressive monarchies, the *terraferma* was vulnerable to outside attack long before 1797, but it is less easy to establish the extent and eventual timing of the degeneration of internal political relationships, and also the measure of real control exercised by Venetian authority over many matters of provincial administration apparently subjected to progressive centralization.

b. *The Aims and Limits of Venetian Policy*

Despite rapid decline to secondary importance in Mediterranean trade from the early 17th century, Venice devoted enormous energy, attention, and resources to long wars over its maritime dominions against the Ottoman Empire between 1645 and 1718.⁴⁹ Those aims seem to have shaped much policy towards the mainland, especially in the form of

⁴⁷ Berengo, *La società*.

⁴⁸ Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, 5 vols (Turin, 1969–90), vol. 5 (1990): *L'Italia dei Lumi*, part 2: *La Repubblica di Venezia (1761–1797)*.

⁴⁹ Where not otherwise stated, what follows in this section is drawn from *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 6 (1994): *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi and Paolo Prodi, and vol. 7 (1997): *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi; and Giovanni

money-raising to pay for war: in vast state sales of common property previously used by rural communities; in admitting new families—including many of mainland origin—to the Venetian patriciate in return for donations of 100,000 ducats each; as well as in other fiscal and financial expedients. Despite such demands, the mainland experienced no significant form of violent protest during the central decades of the 17th century, unlike events elsewhere in Italy and Europe, though what this difference means in terms of political relationships within the state—both then and later—is not wholly clear: well-gauged calculation by Venetian authority of what it could ask for, and how to ask? So conciliatory a stance as to not assert itself? For the first half of the 18th century, furthermore, contingent necessity connected with mainland defense was much in evidence as a result of the European wars of succession. Costly mobilization to support Venice's neutral stance failed to mask the *terraferma*'s vulnerability to attack, especially during the war of the Spanish succession (1701–13), when the transit and presence of campaigning armies wrought considerable material damage in the western and central provinces.

The combination of eastern wars and commitment to mainland defense made the one hundred years or so after 1645 a sort of belated “iron century” for Venice. Despite some innovation in government practice in earlier decades, only between the 1750s and the 1770s did sectors of the Venetian patriciate have the political energy to contemplate wide-ranging reform of government, in the mainland and elsewhere, stimulated by knowledge of similar debate and action in other Italian and European states.

In institutional terms, innovation in mainland government from 1630 onwards largely consisted of empirical development of competence over the provinces by magistracies in the capital, whose action overlaid and undermined that of both patrician governors and local *terraferma* institutions, though eschewing explicitly declared revision of power-sharing between Venetian government and its subjects as established at the moment of annexation. Moreover, the dynamics behind the evolution of central institutions dealing with the mainland, as well as the balance (or imbalance) between Venetian authority in the capital and in the provinces, responded largely to political criteria internal to the patriciate. Tensions and dynamics within the patriciate over issues of power-sharing, though already important before 1630, exerted an increasing influence on the

Scarabello, “Il Settecento,” in Cozzi, Knapton, and Scarabello, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*, vol. 2: *Dal 1517 alla fine della Repubblica* (Turin, 1992), pp. 551–681.

potential development of the structure and function of state organization, in government of both the mainland and the Republic in general. Though the patriciate assimilated *terraferma* ethos more deeply in various ways, especially the social and cultural attitudes and lifestyle of its landowning nobility, its already strong sense of its own and of Venice's past glory and identity gradually gained in introspection. Its political horizons and its potential for statecraft narrowed, so limiting its capacity to take the initiative in government of the *terraferma* and to react to demands and stimuli expressed by mainland society.

Such inhibition was particularly evident in caution over the risks inherent in giving single bodies a dominant role in key sectors of central government. Though there was a general *de facto* drift towards oligarchy, evident after 1630 especially in the power accumulated by the State Inquisitors over increasingly broadly defined issues of state security, formal adherence to republican principles required—among other things—the existence of a plethora of executive magistracies, many with at least partial *terraferma* competence, their number a symbol of power and source of income for patricians but also an obstacle to definition and division of functions and thus, therefore, to efficiency. More so than before, the juxtaposition of old and new magistracies and overlaps and confusion in their competence limited potential rationalization.

In marked contrast with the tendency at the center, for magistracies to expand in numbers and cumulative competence, and also for some revision of their roles, Venetian mainland governors lost overall importance in government of the dominion, though their role remained delicate.⁵⁰ Indeed, proportionally many fewer governors bothered to present final reports after the 1640s, while the reports produced lost breadth and bite—trends only partly reversed after the Ottoman wars. This indicated shifts within patrician career patterns: lesser governorships became more intentionally means of financial support for poor patricians, while major mainland posts, gradually harder to elect to, entailed considerable personal financial outlay by their more ambitious and wealthy fellows. In both cases, their duty easily flattened into largely bureaucratic routine as more capillary government action by agencies in Venice reduced their scope for decision-making and mainland subjects' direct contact with the capital expanded. Nor did this overall profile of permanent Venetian officials in the provinces gain from the presence either of occasional inspectors like

⁵⁰ Knapton, "Dico in scrittura."

the *Sindici Inquisitori* or of functionaries linked to more ordinary magistracies in the capital.

Nonetheless, mainland governors were often a supporting link in information-gathering to support attempts by the government to reform and modernize whole areas of policy. Such action was undertaken most intensely between the 1750s and 1770s, but in the phases of debate and decision about change by the councils of state, much of this preparatory work was nullified by political stalemate. However, even preparatory work for reform involved use of modern methods and instruments of government, as happened, e.g., with the censuses (*Anagrafi*) periodically compiled from 1766 onwards, also largely intended as a premiss for rethinking tax policy.

There were changes of approach and priorities in mainland government between 1630 and 1797. As compared to the previous period, fortifications featured less in defense organization, while for many decades commitment to Ottoman wars was a priority for land forces, though their mobilization to defend the *terraferma* again became a real need in the early 18th century.⁵¹ Mainly during that century, against a European background of progressive changes in military organization, there were belated, partly successful efforts to update army organization by introducing regiments and special corps of artillery and engineers, new methods of recruitment, and a military academy in Verona. But the overall military profile was low, reflecting Venetian awareness of the *terraferma*'s defensive weakness, especially after the Austrian Habsburgs had become the neighboring power to the west as well as to the north and east. Low-profile neutrality was served largely by diplomacy, which also scored some successes in solving problems over mainland borders: thus the 1751 agreement to make ecclesiastical and state boundaries coincide between Venetian Friuli and neighboring Habsburg territory, ending pastoral claims over the latter by the Patriarch of Aquileia.

Terraferma exchequers and their tax revenues, however, became, if anything, a more fundamental concern.⁵² Public finance, in the specific form

⁵¹ Piero Del Negro, "La milizia," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7: *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Benzon and Cozzi, pp. 509–31; Luca Porto, *Una piazzaforte in età moderna. Verona come sistema fortezza (secc. XV–XVIII)* (Milan, 2009).

⁵² Pezzolo, *Una finanza*; Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza"; Paolo Preto, "Le riforme," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8 (1998): *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Piero Del Negro and Paolo Preto, pp. 83–142; Andrea Zannini, "La finanza pubblica: bilanci, fisco, moneta e debito pubblico," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8: *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Del Negro and Preto, pp. 431–77.

of *terraferma* tax policy, also affords a good example of how government innovation stopped at most halfway. Before 1630, increases in mainland tax revenue had derived largely from increased rates of existing indirect levies and from new direct demands largely anchored to existing methods (the division of fixed sums between provinces, further subdivided via *estimo* listing of different social groups' taxable wealth). After 1630, Venice extended to the *terraferma* direct taxes already paid by Venetians—the *campatico* on real estate (1636) and *tanse* on business capital (1650)—but despite what in principle were new criteria, eschewing predetermined totals to be levied and dealing with taxpayers individually and directly for purposes of assessment and payment, local *terraferma* bodies managed to assert some measure of mediation as with *estimo*-based levies. Likewise, the *dazio macina* (milling tax), extended from Venice to the mainland stably from the early 18th century, quickly settled into the form of a poll tax partly differentiated by wealth levels, unpopular and subject to evasion and protest but also substantially influenced by the mediation of local bodies, some of which shared it out via the *estimo*. When Venice decided to unify the listing and assessment of wealth subject to direct dues in the *redecima* of 1740, it did so only partially: the westernmost provinces were excluded, and though declarations were gathered simultaneously from property owners in Venice and the rest of the mainland, there remained a discrepancy in dues between tax-payers listed with the capital and those listed with the provinces, and also between and within single provinces. As to trade and related tax, despite partial improvements over the decades, radical reform of customs and other indirect taxation within the whole state was only decided in 1794, with uniform tariffs ending exemptions and privileges.

There was still no homogeneously conceived policy for *terraferma* agriculture, and the most important changes concerned land ownership, viz., the continuing erosion of peasant property by citizens' purchases, married with further massive investment by Venetians in *terraferma* land.⁵³ The state's alienation of about 90,000 hectares of common property previously used by rural communities between 1647 and 1727 not only aided such investment—about 39 per cent went to Venetian patricians—but also had major social implications for communities long used to exploiting those resources. These sales primarily concerned land in provinces between Friuli and the Trevigiano—whereas in the Bresciano and Bergamasco,

⁵³ Beltrami, *La penetrazione economica*; Barbacetto, "La più gelosa."

sustained local hostility obstructed the conduct of surveys and also, therefore, sales. Similar effects, in favoring aristocratic and citizen landowning, derived from state confiscation and sale of about 11,000 hectares of ecclesiastical property from 1769 onwards.

But despite signs of modernization and higher yields in a few significant areas, especially through drainage and improvement of land in the lower plains of the Veronese, innovation in tenurial systems, land use, technology, crops, etc. was limited overall, and the good intentions proclaimed in the later 18th century—the creation of the magistracy of the *Deputazione all'agricoltura* (1768), old and new agricultural academies supported by the state, debate in newspapers—had little practical impact.⁵⁴ The greatest exception to this blanket continuity of methods and results was the progressive spread of maize cultivation from the early 17th century, its high yields becoming fundamental for covering peasant food needs and therefore the general population increase mentioned above. But it was also perfectly functional to preserving the existing organization of agriculture and almost all its practices and habits, including the generally scarce propensity among nobles to invest and the reduction of the majority of the peasantry to bare subsistence—just as the further increase in the property of nobles and citizens is better considered continuity than change. Food supply policy lost the perennial urgency it had possessed in the century preceding the 1630 plague, only to recover it with the marked increase in population in the mid- to later 18th century.

As for policy towards trade and manufacturing, recent research has redressed previous historiography's heavy dependence on source material produced by or for central authority (especially the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*) and, more importantly, its tendency to evaluate economic performance within the perspective of Venetian policy.⁵⁵ Those sources, that policy, and historical debate were particularly attentive to such issues as: the rates, yields, and economic implications of taxes affecting production and circulation of goods, including customs barriers internal to the state; the binomium protectionism/mercantilism-liberalism, especially in relation to foreign competition; a primarily conflictual conception of the respective roles of capital and provinces; the declining fortunes of older manufactured products; the constrictions of the guild

⁵⁴ Michele Simonetto, *I lumi nelle campagne. Accademie e agricoltura nella Repubblica di Venezia 1768–1797* (Treviso, 2001); Giuseppe Gullino, "Venezia e le campagne," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8: *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Del Negro and Preto, pp. 651–702.

⁵⁵ Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre*.

system; and the overall efficacy of government choices, including scant success in repressing contraband circulation of goods. As already stated, major reform of indirect taxes came only in 1794, and action to reform the guilds was equally tardy, but the buoyancy of market forces and the initiative of entrepreneurs had in many ways preceded and pre-empted the state. This meant the dynamism of areas more rural than urban; the successful development of new products, which in textiles meant not just lower-quality woollen cloth but also silk cloth and thread and a variety of knitted goods; and the adaptability of the organization of production. Especially important was the vitality of trading networks and circuits both Italian and European, not centered on Venice or dominated by it but, indeed, often excluding it. A 1773 government report reckoned that only a third of the *terraferma*'s imports were routed via Venice, though in these decades almost half the goods handled by its port were mainland exports and imports.⁵⁶ Exclusion of Venice from trade circuits was particularly evident for the *terraferma*'s Lombard provinces, which by the 18th century gravitated very largely towards the duchy of Milan and its international dealings, and in the same period Habsburg lands east and north of Friuli, including the free port of Trieste, exerted a similar attraction.

As to law and order, the early 17th-century transfer of much handling of penal justice away from lawcourts dominated by *terraferma* aristocracies was no panacea in lowering overall levels of violence, whether linked to nobles or others.⁵⁷ After 1630, problems of collective rather than individual violence (banditry, brigandage, protest, etc.) remained serious in certain types of areas—e.g., in the proximity of boundaries between jurisdictions, where they were also associated with smuggling—and also especially in relation to the social pressure generated by population increase, peasant impoverishment, and food scarcity, evident from mid-18th century. There were no radical changes over the period 1630–1797 in the anomalous relationship between Venetian and *terraferma* law, despite centuries of contiguity and intermingling in the practice of the courts, especially through patrician provincial governors' handling of penal cases and the work of civil appeal courts in the capital; mainland statutes were still formally in use but accompanied by a sedimentation of norms of Venetian provenance. The lasting difficulty and delicacy of the issues at stake are

⁵⁶ Scarabello, "Il Settecento," p. 604.

⁵⁷ Povolo, "Un sistema giuridico"; Chiodi and Povolo, *L'amministrazione della giustizia*; Berengo, *La società veneta*.

confirmed by the failure of 18th-century reform—proposed, partly undertaken, but never formally completed or confirmed by the councils of state—to codify and simplify mainline civil and criminal lawcodes (less contentious, and therefore a tardy but very partial success, was the publication in 1780 of a feudal lawcode).

In ecclesiastical policy, after back-pedaling during the 17th century on the policy earlier advocated by Paolo Sarpi, for assertion of fuller state sovereignty over the traditional privileges enjoyed by the clergy, and for clearer separation between the secular and the ecclesiastical spheres, there was resumption of a more hardline approach around mid-18th century, in tune with most of Europe.⁵⁸ This policy had direct implications for the mainland: in the imposition of more efficacious rules concerning mortmain; in the already mentioned confiscation and sale of church property; in a considerable reduction in the number of houses of the religious orders and the numbers of professed nuns, monks, and friars; and in the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773, with collateral though minor effects on schooling, since Jesuit secondary schools in various *terraferma* cities were converted into state schools.

c. *Mainland Society*

In the relationship between the Venetian patriciate and mainland aristocracies, signs of more direct hostility to Venice by the latter diminished and patronage relations between the two groups seem to have intensified. But there remained the general impediment to the linkage between the state and mainland society—a problem common to all early modern republican states, not just Venice—constituted by the lack of substantial career opportunities and access to power for leading members of provincial society, obstructed by the existing ruling elite's hold on mainline government.

No solution to this problem came from the admission of 128 new families to the Venetian patriciate between 1646 and 1718, even though many were connected with the mainland and a stronger link between the capital and provincial society had been hoped for.⁵⁹ Many of the families with mainland associations had already largely transferred to Venice in pursuit of careers as merchants or lawyers, and their new patrician status

⁵⁸ Preto, "Le riforme."

⁵⁹ Roberto Sabbadini, *L'acquisto della tradizione. Tradizione aristocratica e nuova nobiltà a Venezia (secoli XVII–XVIII)* (Udine, 1995).

generally further reduced remaining mainland identity. There were only 23 *terraferma* noble families involved, some already more closely linked to the state than most mainland aristocrats by a tradition of military or other service. The majority were from Padua and Vicenza, physically nearer Venice, while the leading families of the major cities of Verona and Brescia were almost totally absent. Assimilation into the patriciate proved relatively easier for the nobles, but all the newly admitted families had a slow, gradual path towards access to important patrician offices, even though the last doge of Venice—Lodovico Manin—was of a Friulan family admitted at this time. Eloquent about the growing gap between the Venetian patriciate and mainland elites during the later 18th century is the fact that only 11 new families were admitted when access to the patriciate was again made possible in 1776–88 with a view to attracting 40 *terraferma* noble families.

The overall political destiny of *terraferma* aristocracies in this period needs further study, which would also provide more conclusive evidence in favor of recognizing the decades either side of 1600 as a major turning point for their overall autonomy in relation to Venetian authority, as mentioned above in connection with alterations in the working of penal justice. The prestige of civic council membership was perhaps slower to decline than were civic bodies' scope for initiative and margins of autonomy in decision-making, though research on Verona suggests caution in exaggerating this latter trend.⁶⁰ Towards the end of the period, though formal social hierarchy was not adjusted to take account of the "third estate," the lower profile of civic councils seems to have been partly counter-balanced, in terms of interest and active involvement in civic matters, by at least some of the academies. During the 18th century, this already long-running feature of the urban life of the elites partook of some of the spirit of Enlightened culture—and such culture, both inside and beyond the academies, could bring together nobles and "bourgeois."⁶¹

However, despite Venetian restriction of their involvement in penal justice, much of civic institutions' control over ordinary urban and rural administration remained intact, and the low profile of councils was at least partly compensated by the power of generic executive bodies (*deputati* and similar), access to which—as to other important posts—was

⁶⁰ Porto, *Una piazzaforte*.

⁶¹ Venturi, *Settecento Riformatore*, vol. 5, part 2.

largely manoeuvred by influential minority groups, amid keen rivalry.⁶² Especially in the 17th century, a clear further expression of local elites' power lay in many of their members' inclination to pay taxes late and only in part, to behave similarly in settling up after holding public posts involving money-handling, and in their collective promptness in deviating public funds destined to social needs, e.g., in borrowing from civic pawn-banks to cover Venetian tax demands on their cities. The general importance of preeminence in provincial civic bodies as material support to local elites—in licit and illicit sources of income, in protection against heavier tax rates and *de facto* tolerance for under- or non-payment of tax—became abundantly clear after 1797, when heavy direct tax imposed by new governments was a major cause of the rapid patrimonial collapse of many aristocratic families, though this was also due to other factors, including their weakened inner cohesion. However, mainland nobles in general survived these decades of change much better than Venetian patricians.

Differences in a city's size and distance from Venice roughly corresponded at least partly to differences in the wealth and solidity of local elites, both in dealings with Venetian authority and in relating to other components of local society. Amidst often fanciful reconstruction of genealogies, and despite prejudice and polemics by established noble families against parvenus, there was slow but cumulatively significant long-term turnover among the families constituting some council elites, seemingly more evident in cities nearer Venice, like Padua, or in smaller places like Feltre, with newer families more desirous of this recognition in the 17th century than the 18th.⁶³ Such issues are immensely complex, however: the failure of reform of the Brescia city council in 1644 was clearly no boost to the prestige of the Venetian city governors of the time, favorable to change. But during the 16th century, the numbers of both council members and families involved had increased substantially—though at that time a good many powerful Brescian noble families took little or no part in council life and the office-holding connected with it.⁶⁴

⁶² Michael Knapton, "Cenni sulle strutture fiscali nel Bresciano nella prima metà del Settecento," in Maurizio Pegrari, ed., *La società bresciana e l'opera di Giacomo Ceruti* (Brescia, 1988), pp. 53–104; Paolo Ulvioni, "La nobiltà padovana nel Sei-Settecento," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 104 (1992), 796–840.

⁶³ Ulvioni, "La nobiltà padovana"; Gigi Corazzol, *Cineografo di banditi su sfondo di monti. Feltre 1634–1642* (Milan, 1997).

⁶⁴ Joanne Ferraro, "Oligarchs, Protesters and the Republic of Venice: The 'Revolution of the Discontents' in Brescia, 1644–1645," *Journal of Modern History* 60/4 (1988), 627–53.

As to the rural environment, there was no drastic change in the responsibilities discharged by its institutions.⁶⁵ The *corpi territoriali* seem to have lost their inclination to challenge urban jurisdiction any further in the course of the 17th century, settling for the exercise of the functions they had achieved. There was periodic action by Venetian authority, especially the *Sindici Inquisitori* and city governors, to regulate the functioning of mainland institutions, primarily by decreeing rules—concerned with their budgeting, taxing, borrowing, spending, and auditing; with use of collective property and rights; and with turnover in executive offices. Such action seems to have addressed rural bodies more than urban ones, not just *contado*-level *corpi territoriali* but also mountain valley communities and intermediate administrative levels such as vicariates, as well as single communities. But its actual impact on administrative practice and underlying political strategies by local elites seems limited, and this scepticism may be extended to Venetian pressure to limit discrimination within single rural communities between families of local origin and of more recent immigration, which had significant practical implications for access to collective property and rights.

Central government sought to develop political communication and direct contact with single rural communities via mechanisms such as petitions, and in the specific circumstances of Friuli it sought to extend the Udine governor's judicial competence within feudal jurisdictions (supported by the city of Udine's aspiration to redress its own jurisdictional weakness). However, other features of policy did little to favor such communication and contact. The long Ottoman wars were accompanied by the sale of new mainland feudal rights, whose overall valency may be considered more social and economic than jurisdictional in strict terms, indicating the central government's lack of concern about the risk of substantial loss of sovereignty—a different attitude from that advocated in Sarpi's 1621 short treatise on Friulan feudal jurisdictions.⁶⁶ Furthermore, despite rural society's undying capacity to generate what might be called bourgeois families, despite the immense variety of local situations, despite

⁶⁵ Knapton, "Cenni sulle strutture fiscali"; Ivana Pederzani, *Venezia e lo "Stado de Terraferma."* *Il governo delle comunità nel territorio bergamasco (secc. XV–XVIII)* (Milan, 1992); Germano Maifreda, *Rappresentanze rurali e proprietà contadina. Il caso veronese fra Sei e Settecento* (Milan, 2002).

⁶⁶ Sergio Zamperetti, "Patriziato e giurisdizioni private," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7, ed. Benzoni and Cozzi, pp. 201–23.

alternate phases in economic trends, it does seem that in prevalently agricultural areas, peasant society in general gradually lost solidity.⁶⁷

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VENICE'S MARITIME EMPIRE IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Benjamin Arbel

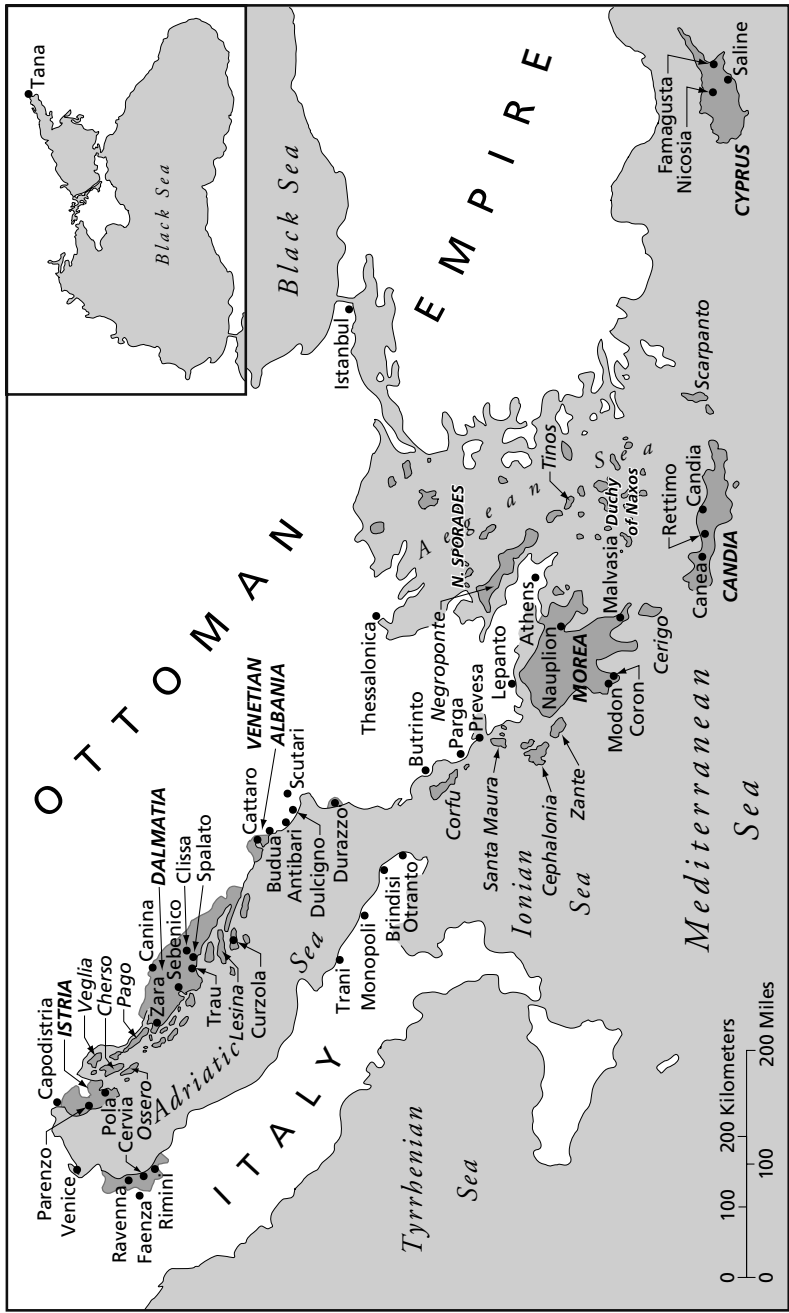
I. *The Peculiarities of the stato da mar*

Until the late 14th century, most of Venice's extra urban territories were overseas.¹ It is only from the early 15th century onward that Venice gradually conquered the extensive territories of the northeastern Italian mainland. The maritime territories and those situated in the Italian mainland were then part of the same state, ruled by the same magistrates and central councils, and according to the same political concepts and ideas. Nevertheless, there were some significant characteristics that distinguished between these two components of the Venetian body politic.

The various terms used to denote Venice's overseas possessions, such as *terre da mar*, *stato di mare*, *stato da mar*, *stati oltremare*, as well as other similar terms encountered in early modern sources,² express the predominantly maritime character of this part of the Venetian state. From a

¹ For surveys of Venice's overseas territories during the Middle Ages, see Freddy Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne au Moyen Âge. Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien (XII^e–XV^e siècles)*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1975); Giorgio Ravegnani, "La Romania Veneziana," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, eds., *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 2 (1995): *L'età del comune*, eds. Giorgio Cracco and Gherardo Ortalli, pp. 183–232; David Jacoby, "La Venezia d'oltremare" in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2: *L'età del comune*, eds. Cracco and Ortalli, pp. 263–99; and Silvano Borsari, "I veneziani delle colonie," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 3 (1997): *La formazione dello stato patrizio*, eds. Girolamo Arnaldi, Giorgio Cracco, and Alberto Tenenti, pp. 127–58.

² E.g., *Loci a parte maris* (Giuseppe Maranini, *La costituzione di Venezia*, 2 vols (Florence, 1927, repr. 1974), 2:342 n. 3 {1413}); [*terre nostre*] *a parte maris* (Vladimir Lamansky, *Secrets d'État de Venise. Documents, extraits, notices et études*, 2 vols (St. Petersburg, 1884), 2:721 {1432–3}); *lochi marittimi* (Girolamo Priuli, *I Diarii (1494–1512)*, 4 vols (1912–38), vol. 2, ed. Roberto Cessi, p. 145 {1501}); *status nostrus marittimus*, Lamansky, *Secrets d'État*, 2:608n {1503}); *le terre nostre da mar* (Archivio di stato, Venezia, Senato Mar, reg. 18, fol. 91 {1515}); *stato di mare* (Giovanni Botero, *Relatione della Repubblica Venetiana* (Venice, 1605), pp. 10v, 17–19 {1605}); *stati da mar(e)* (Museo Civico Correr, MS Donà dalle Rose 21 n.p. {early 17th century}); *li Reggimenti . . . da Mare* (Vettor Sandi, *Principi di storia civile della Repubblica di Venezia . . . dall'anno di N.S. 1700 sino all'anno 1767*, 3 vols (Venice, 1769–72), 1:173 {1769}); *stati oltremare* (Fabio Besta, *Bilanci generali della Repubblica di Venezia*, vol. 1/1 (Venice, 1912), p. 358 {1795}). Other terms, such as *Romania alta e bassa*, were used to denote overseas regions that were not ruled by Venice.



Map 4.1 The *stato da mar*. (For the chronology of acquisitions and losses, see Table I, pp. 132–136)

Venetian perspective, the territories included in it were reachable only by sea,³ and they were also strongly linked to the routes of Venice's maritime trade. But above all, the Republic's overseas territories must have been conceived by the early modern Venetians as a different cultural sphere. In contrast to the *terraferma*, where all Venetian subjects used dialects that were relatively not very different from the Venetian ones, where practically everybody was Roman Catholic, and where Venetian patri-cians spent a great part of their time in their villas, the overseas territories presented cultural and physical milieus that were considerably different from the Venetian one. Such a feeling of estrangement could already be experienced by Venetians in the Republic's dominions within the Adriatic, once you went some distance from the coast towns of Istria and Dalmatia into the inner provinces, particularly during the last two centuries covered by this chapter, following the massive settlement of Morlachs in these regions.⁴ The cultural difference between the Italian dominions and Venice's Hellenic territories, even those, such as Crete, where Venetian settlers had lived for several centuries, were of no less significance.

One of the foremost distinctive elements was language. Even in the Dalmatian towns, which are often depicted in modern historiography as "Little Italies," Italian language and culture remained restricted to a minority of local elites. Most of the inhabitants spoke Croatian and dressed like Croats, and many of them did not understand Italian.⁵ The distinction between Italians and *Oltramarini* (based on linguistic differences) was maintained in Venice as long as the Republic existed.⁶ The recurrent need to use the services of interpreters for communication, not only with neighbors across the border but also with local subjects, a phenomenon unknown in the *terraferma*, must have added to a sense of estrangement among both subjects and governors in the *stato da mar*.⁷

³ "Stato di mare chiameremo quello, che confina con le lagune; e per andarvi, senza toccar altrui, bisogna passar il mare," Botero, *Relatione della Repubblica venetiana*, 10v.

⁴ Marino Berengo, "Problemi economico-sociali della Dalmazia veneta alla fine del '700," *Rivista storica italiana* 66 (1954), 472–74.

⁵ Ivan Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung Dalmatiens und ihre Organe (XV. und XVI. Jahrhundert)," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 12 (1986), 116, 125; Ivan Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung. Die Innen- und die Aussenpolitik in Dalmatien (XVI. bis XVIII. Jh.)," *Studi veneziani* 15 (1988), 200.

⁶ Piero Del Negro, "La politica militare di Venezia e lo stato da mar nel Sei-Settecento," *Studi veneziani* 39 (2000), 120; Tea Mayhew, *Dalmatia between Ottoman and Venetian Rule. Contado Di Zara, 1645–1718* (Rome, 2008), p. 47.

⁷ Anastasia Papadia-Lala, "L'interprete nel mondo greco-veneziano (XIV–XVIII sec.). Lingua, comunicazione, politica," in Chryssa Maltezou, Angeliki Tzavara, and Despina

Furthermore, religious cleavage was a central factor in the life and administration of Venice's overseas territories. Differences concerning religious rites and dogmas and clashes between jurisdictions occasionally arose against the backdrop of the rule of a Roman Catholic power over non-Catholic subjects. But tensions also developed between Venice and the overseas representatives of the militant Roman Church concerning policies regarding the Republic's non-Catholic subjects.

Legal and institutional traditions, often originating from a distant Byzantine or Crusader presence, including different monetary units, weights and measures, codes of law, and public institutions, also rendered daily life in many of Venice's colonies quite dissimilar to that which Venetians were accustomed in their own city, as well as in the *terraferma*. One can even imagine that the Venetian magistrates, although coming from a cosmopolitan city, when serving overseas, could hardly pronounce properly the names of a great number of their subjects.

A distinctive trait of most maritime colonies of Venice (with the exception of Istria) was the sense of insecurity that reigned in their towns and countryside, which were subject to piratical raids and the threat of imminent Ottoman invasions. Even in peacetime, especially in areas such as Dalmatia and Albania, robbery, theft of cattle and horses, and attacks on caravans across the border were a matter of routine.⁸ On the Adriatic seafront, the Almissa pirates (until 1444), the Uskoks of Segna (Senj) (until the early 17th century), as well as Ottoman pirates from Dulcigno (Ulcinj), Obbrovazzo (Obrovac), Durazzo, Valona, and the Maghreb added their share to the sense of insecurity all along the eastern Adriatic and the Ionian Islands. The Venetian colonies situated outside the Adriatic did not fare much better in this respect. In Zante and Corfu there was a special fund for the redemption of local inhabitants taken into slavery.⁹

Vlassi, eds., *I Greci durante La venetocrazia: nomi, spazio, idee* (XIII–XVIII sec.) (Venice 2009), pp. 121–30; Rembert Eufe, "Politica linguistica della Serenissima: Luca Tron, Antonio Condulmer, Marin Sanudo e il volgare nell'amministrazione veneziana a Creta," *PhiN/Philologie im Netz* 23 (2003), 28; Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe," pp. 104–05, 137–38; Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," pp. 186, 191, 211–12.

⁸ Giuseppe Praga, *History of Dalmatia* (Pisa, 1993), pp. 162–63; Mayhew, *Dalmatia*, pp. 26–27, 256–59.

⁹ Francis W. Carter, "Settlement and Population During Venetian Rule (1420–1797): Hvar Island, Croatia," *Journal of European Economic History* 23 (1994), 9, 24, 33; Catherine Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca, 1992); Apostolos E. Vacalopolus, *The Greek Nation, 1453–1669. The Cultural and Economic Background of Modern Greek Society* (New Brunswick, 1976), pp.

These frontier societies were also often at the mercy of Ottoman officials, who exercised in various ways tactics of extortion from their neighbors.¹⁰ Such phenomena, hardly known in the Venetian *terraferma*, were quite common in peacetime along the extended landed frontiers of these areas, especially between the late 15th and the late 17th century.

The chronic insecurity felt in the *stato da mar* resulted in transforming military affairs into central elements of life in these territories, to a much greater degree than in the *terraferma*. The huge resources invested on fortifications and other defensive measures were a great financial burden for Venice and its subjects and involved numerous hardships for the local inhabitants. They also symbolized the precariousness of life in the maritime territories. Venetian overseas colonies depended to a great extent on the defensive shield provided by Venice's fleet, and the role of the *Provveditore General dell'Armata*, who acted not only as a navy commander but also as supreme authority over the colonies in peacetime as well as during wars, was another idiosyncratic feature of the overseas colonies.

In addition, a formal distinction between maritime territories and mainland ones was implemented in the administrative, judicial, and fiscal spheres. In 1430, the *Collegio*, the Senate's steering committee, underwent a reform, which divided between "ministers" (*Savii*) who were responsible for the *terraferma* and the army, and those, the *Savii ai ordini*, who were responsible for the maritime territories, maritime trade, and the fleet.¹¹ From 1440, the registers in which the decisions of the Venetian Senate were noted down were divided between those pertaining to the city and the Italian mainland (*Deliberazioni Terra*), and those dealing with the maritime dimension of Venice's life, including the overseas possessions (*Deliberazioni Mar*). Magistrates serving in territories lying beyond the

70–75; Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. S. Reynolds, 2 vols (London, 1975), p. 130; Gunther Rothenberg, "Venice and the Uskoks of Senj, 1537–1618," *Journal of Modern History* 33/2 (1961), 148–56; Angeliki Panopoulou, "Episodi di pirateria nello spazio marittimo di Cerigo tra il XIII e il XVIII secolo," in Marina Koumanoudi and Chryssa Maltezou, eds., *Venezia e Cerigo* (Venice, 2003), pp. 138–39; Egidio Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna. Un'introduzione ai secoli XVI–XVIII* (Trieste/Rovigno, 1999), p. 25; Stephan Karl Sander, *Urban Elites in the Venetian Commonwealth: Social and Economic Mobility in Early Modern Dalmatia (Zadar/Zara, 1540 to 1570)* (Ph.D. diss., Karl-Franzens Universität Graz, 2011), p. 260.

¹⁰ E.g., Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Des melons pour la cour du Sancak Beg': Split et son arrière-pays ottoman à travers les registres de compte de l'administration vénitienne dans les années 1570," in Vera Costantini and Markus Koller, eds., *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faruqi* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 447–50.

¹¹ Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore/London, 1973), p. 254.

Quarnaro Gulf and those serving in territories lying to the north of this gulf (including Italy), were subject to different administrative regulations.¹² The term of office of Venetian governors in most maritime territories was longer than service in the mainland ones,¹³ and so were the deadlines for presentation of documents required for clearance of former governors, without which they could not be elected to other offices.¹⁴ In the judicial sphere, unlike the situation in the *terraferma*, Venetian magistrates in overseas territories had an exclusive right to adjudicate criminal cases, and the process of appeal was also sometimes different, especially in the later period.¹⁵ In the financial administration, the reviewing of the accounts of maritime colonies was entrusted to separate functionaries in Venice, and the official balance sheets also distinguished between, on the one hand, Venice and the *terraferma* (sometimes, though not always, taken together) and the maritime dominions.¹⁶ These administrative, bureaucratic, and judicial distinctions must have contributed to a consciousness among Venetian officials of the differences between the Republic's mainland and the overseas territories.

Although the need to reach a subject territory by ship was the basic criterion of its inclusion in the maritime dominions, this criterion was somewhat ambiguous. The Senate's decisions concerning Chioggia sometimes appear in the *Deliberazioni Mar* registers, probably owing to some confusion in the Venetian chancery regarding the dividing line between those two wings of the Venetian lion. Ravenna, which was conquered in 1441 and lay beyond the duchy of Ferrara and, consequently, had to be reached by sea, was considered to be part of the maritime state until 1485, when the Council of Ten decreed that it would henceforth be included

¹² E.g., Simeon Ljubić, ed., *Commissiones et relationes*, 8 vols (Zagreb, 1876), 1:1 (1433). See also Marin Sanudo, *I Diarii*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1902), 2:36–37 (1498), 890–891 (1499).

¹³ Samuele Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, 3rd ed., 10 vols (Venice, 1972–75), 8:345–47.

¹⁴ Andrea Zannini, *Il sistema di revisione contabile della Serenissima. Istituzioni, personale, procedure (secc. XVI–XVIII)* (Venice, 1994), p. 22.

¹⁵ Gaetano Cozzi, "La politica del diritto nella Repubblica di Venezia," in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato, società e giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (sec. XV–XVIII)* (Rome, 1980), p. 66; Filippo Maria Paladini, "Paterni tiranni: mito e antimito, autorità e conflitto nella Dalmazia veneta," in Sante Graciotti, ed., *Mito e antimito di Venezia nel bacino adriatico (secoli XV–XIX). Atti del Covegno Italo-Croato, Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 11–13 novembre 1997* (Rome, 2001), p. 195. Cf. Angelo Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo nella società veneta del '400 e '500* (Bari, 1964), pp. 440–46; James S. Grubb, *Firstborn of Venice. Vicenza in the Early Renaissance State* (Baltimore/London, 1988), pp. 57–58.

¹⁶ Zannini, *Il sistema di revisione*, pp. 18–23; Besta, *Bilanci Generali*, 1/1:589–90 (mid-16th century); Romanin, *Storia documentata*, 9: 358 (1795).

inter civitates et terras nostras a parte terrae.¹⁷ Its location at a relatively short distance from Venice and the fact that it was culturally an Italian town may have led to this change, but the very fact that such a change necessitated a decision by the Council of Ten is significant.

Istria presents an even more ambiguous case. More culturally akin to Italy than to Crete or Cyprus, it still differed from Venice and even from Friuli, the easternmost province of the *terraferma*. Despite its location across the northern Adriatic, it was occasionally treated as part of the *terraferma*,¹⁸ as is reflected in the above-mentioned distinction between territories lying beyond the Quarnaro Gulf and those located to the north of it.¹⁹ But more often, especially during the first centuries covered by this volume, Istria was considered part of Venice's maritime possessions. In the Senate's registers, decisions related to Istria are normally, though not always, included in the series *Deliberazioni Mar*.²⁰ In his description of the Venetian Republic, published in Venice in 1605, Giovanni Botero also considers Istria part of the *stato di mare*.²¹ At any rate, being the maritime province closest to Venice, there was a constant movement between the Istrian port towns and the imperial metropolis. To use Egidio Ivetic's expression, Istria was "Venice's maritime springboard."²²

II. *The Changing Frontiers*

The See-Saw of Acquisitions and Losses

No systematic chronology of Venetian acquisitions and losses in its early-modern overseas empire exists, which may account for the numerous impressionistic affirmations regarding the *stato da mar*. Since editorial constraints preclude a detailed narration of acquisitions and losses in this chapter, I have condensed the relevant data in the following table, leaving a more detailed discussion of these developments to my forthcoming book on Venice's overseas dominions in the early modern period.²³

¹⁷ Benjamin Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 5 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, eds. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 954–55.

¹⁸ Marin Sanudo, *Itinerario di Marin Sanuto per la Terraferma veneziana l'anno MCCCCLXXXIII*, ed. Rawdon Brown (Padua, 1847), p. 147.

¹⁹ Michael Knapton, "L'Istria nel Sei-Settecento," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 599 (2004), 128.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Botero, *Relatione della Republica venetiana*, pp. 10v, 17.

²² Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 33.

²³ Some relatively detailed accounts of the territorial changes in Venice's overseas territories can be found in Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne*; John V.A. Fine, *The Late*

Table I. Venetian overseas territories, 15th–18th centuries.

TERRITORY	YEARS OF VENETIAN RULE IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD	BISHOPRICS
I. The North-Eastern Adriatic & Istria		
Trieste	1508 (May)–1509 (June)	Bp
Fiume (Rijeka)	1508–09	
Muggia (Milje)	1420–1797	
Capodistria (Justinopolis, Koper)	[1278]–1797	Bp
Pirano (Piran)	[1283]–1797	
Umago (Umag)	[1269]–1797	
San Lorenzo	[1271]–1797	
Cittanova d'Istria (Novigrad)	[1270]–1797	Bp
Buie, Bugie (Buje)	1412–1797	
Grisignana (Grožnjan)	[1358]–1797	
Raspo (Rašpor)	[1394]–1797	
Pinguente (Buzet)	1421–1797	
Montona (Motovun)	[1275]–1797	
Parenzo (Poreč)	[1267]–1797	Bp
Rovigno (Rovinj)	[1283]–1797	
Valle	[1331]–1797	
Pola (Pula)	[1331]–1797	Bp
Dignano (Vodnjan)	[1330]–1797	
Albona (Labin)	1420–1797	
Fianona (Plomin)	1420–1797	
II. Romagna		
Ravenna [from 1485; TF]	1441–1509; 1527–29	Abp
Cervia	1463–1509; 1527–29	
Rimini	1503–09	Bp
Faenza	1503–09	Bp
III. Dalmatia		
Cherso (Cres) & Ossero (Losinj)	1409–1797	Bp
Veglia (Krk)	1481–1797	Bp
Arbe (Rab)	1409–1797	Bp
Pago (Pag)	1409–1797	
Nona (Nin)	1409–1797 (temporarily abandoned, 1646–69)	Bp
Nadino (Nadin)	1409–1538; 1647–1797	
Zara (Iadra, Zadar)	1409–1797	Abp
Novegradi (Novigrad)	1409–1646; 1647–1797	

Table I (*cont.*)

TERRITORY	YEARS OF VENETIAN RULE IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD	BISHOPRICS
Obrovazzo (Obrovac)	1409–1527; 1647–70; 1687–1797	
Laurana (Vrana)	1409–1538; 1647–1797	
Ostrovizza (Oštrovica)	1411–1412; 1684–1797	
Scardona (Skradin)	1411–12; 1684–1797	Bp
Canina (Knin)	1688–1797	
Sebenico (Sibenik)	1412–1797	Bp
Trau (Trogir)	1420–1797	Bp
Spalato (Split)	1420–1797	Abp
Sign (Sinj)	1648–69; 1686–1797	
Imoschi (Imotski)	1717–97	
Clissa (Klis)	1648–1797	
Pogliza (Poljička knežija)	1444–before 1567; 1646–1797 (<i>de facto</i>)	
Almissa (Omiš)	1443–1797	
Brazza (Brač)	1420–1797	
Lesina, Liesina (Hvar)	1421–1797	Bp
Lissa (Vis)	1420–1797	
Macarsca (Makarska)	1452–99; 1646–1797 (<i>de facto</i>)	Bp (1695–)
Curzola (Korčula)	1420–1797	Bp
IV. Montenegro & Albania (<i>Albania Veneta</i>) [see also section VII]		
Castelnuovo (Herceg Novi)	1687–1797	
Cattaro (Kotor)	1420–1797	Bp
Perasto (Perast)	1420–1797	
Risano (Risan)	1649 (shortly); 1688–1797	Bp
Pastrovicchio (Paštrovići)	1423–1797	
Budua (Budva)	1405–12; 1420–26; 1442–1797 (with a short Ott. Conquest in 1570)	Bp
Antibari (Bar, Tivari)	1405–12; 1420–21; 1443–1571	Abp
Dulcigno (Ulcinj)	1405–12; 1422–40; 1443–1571	Bp
Scutari (Skutari, Shkodra, Skadar)	[1396]–1404; 1405–79	Bp
Drivasto (Drisht)	[1396]–1419 (with a short interval in 1405); 1421 (shortly); 1442–78	Bp
Sappa	1445–58	Bp
Dagno (Deja)	[1396]–1404; 1405–79 (with a short interval in 1447–48)	Bp
Alessio (Lezha)	[1393]–1478; 1501–09	Bp
Croia (Kruja)	[1393]–1415; 1469–74	Bp
Durazzo (Durrës)	[1392]–1501	Abp

Table I (*cont.*)

TERRITORY	YEARS OF VENETIAN RULE IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD	BISHOPRICS
V. Apulia		
Trani	1496–1509; 1528–30	Abp
Mola	1497–1509; 1528–30 (with the exception of the fortress)	
Polignano	1495–1509; 1528–30	Bp
Monopoli	1495–1509; 1528–30	Bp
Brandizo, Brandusio (Brindisi)	1496–1509; 1528–30 (with the exception of the 2 fortresses)	Abp
Otranto	1496–1509	Abp
VI. The Ionian Islands		
Corfù (Kerkyra)	[1386]–1797	Abp
Paxo (Paxi) & Antipaxo	[1386]–1797	
Cephalonia (Kefalonia)	1500–1797	Bp + Gbp [with Zante]
Teachi (Ithaca)	1500–1797	
Zante (Zakynthos)	1482–1797	Bp + Gbp [with Cephal.]
Santa Maura (Lefkada)	1502–03; 1684–1715; 1716–97	Gr. Apb
VII. Epirus & the Western Greek Mainland		
Sopotò (Corfu's mainland dependency)	[1386?]-1537 [?]; 1570–71	
Butrinto (Bouthrotò) (Corfu's mainland dependency)	[1386]–1797 (with intervals)	
Parga (Corfu's mainland dependency)	1401–52; 1454–1797 (destr. 1537, but recognized as Ven. in 1540 and reconst. c.1561)	
Saiata, Sagiada/Bastià (Corfu's mainland dependency)	[1386]–1452 (with small intervals); 1454–79; 1718–97	
Preveza	1684–99; 1717–97 (as part of Venetian Albania)	
Vonizza (Vonitsa)	1684–99; 1717–97 (as part of Venetian Albania)	
Lepanto (Nafpaktos)	1407–99; 1687–1701	
VIII. Morea (The Peloponnese) (Morea)		
Patras	1408–13; 1417–19; 1687–1715	
Vostizza (Vostitsa, Aigion)	1685–1715	

Table I (*cont.*)

TERRITORY	YEARS OF VENETIAN RULE IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD	BISHOPRICS
Navarino (Zonchio, Pylos)	1420–Aug. 1500; Dec. 1500–May 1501; 1686–1715	
Modon (Methoni)	[1207]–1500; 1686–1715	Bp
Coron (Koroni)	[1207]–1500; 1685–1715	Bp
Brazzo di Maina	1463–79; 1685–1715	
Malvasia (Monemvasia)	1462–1540; (Nov.); 1690–1715	Bp
Napoli di Romania (Nauplion)	[1389]–1540; 1686–1715	
Argos	[1394]–1463 (a short Ott. conquest in 1397); 1686–1715	Bp
Acrocorinto	1687–1715	
Mistra (Mistras)	1687–1715	
Castel Tornese (Chlemoutsi)	1687–1715	
Morea (entirely)	1685/9–1715	1 Abp+3 Bps; 11 Gr. Abps/Mets & 28 Gbps
IX. The Cretan Archipelago		
Candia (isl.) Candia (Crete)	[1211]–1669 (with the exception of Grabusa (until 1692), Suda & Spinalonga (until 1715))	Abp+6–7 Bps
Cerigo (Kythera)	[1208 (1363)]–1715; 1718–97	Gbp
Cerigotto (Antikythera)	[1208]–1715; 1718–97	
Scarpanto (Karpathos)	[1315]–1540 (the Corner fam.)	
X. Aegean Islands		
a. The Cyclades	From 1383 until 1566 (from 1540 under Ottomans OL), ruled by the Crispo fam. 1419–1540: under Ven. OL; 1494–1500, 1511–17: direct Ven. Rule.	Abp
Nixia, Nicosia (Duchy of Naxos)		
Andros (part of the Duchy of Naxos)	1437–1440: direct Venetian rule	
Tino (Tinos)	[1390]–1715. First held by the Bembo Querini & Falier fam.; direct Ven. rule from 1429.	Bp
Micoli (Mykonos)	[1390]–1540. First held by the Bembo, Querini & Falier fam.; direct Ven. rule from 1429.	
Delo (Delos)	[1390]–1540 [as Mykonos]	

Table I (*cont.*)

TERRITORY	YEARS OF VENETIAN RULE IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD	BISHOPRICS
b. The Western Aegean		
Legina (Egina)	1451–1540; 1687–1715	
Negroponte (Euboia, Evia)	[1390]–1470 (direct Ven. rule)	Bp
c. The Northern Sporades and Northern Aegean		
Schiato (Skiatos)	1453–1540	
Sciopoli (Skopelos)	1453–1540	
Schiro (Skyros)	1453–1540	
Lemno (Limnos, Stalimeni)	1464–79; 1656–57	
Inbro (Imbros, Canakkale)	1466–70	
Taso (Tassos)	1466–79	
Samotraccia (Evros, Samotrake)	1466–79	
XI. The Eastern Greek Mainland		
Athens	[1394]–1403; 1687–88	
Fitileo (Pteleon)	[1337]–1470	
Salonica (Thesaloniki)	1423–30	Gbp
XII. The Eastern Mediterranean		
Cyprus	1474–1571	Abp+3 Bps +4Gbps
XIII. The Black Sea		
Tana (Azak, Rostov)	1397–1478	

Abbreviations: Abp=Latin archbishop's seat; Bp (without further specification)=Latin bishop's seat; destr.=destroyed; ent.=entirely; fam.=family, families; Gr.=Greek; Gbp=Greek bishop; Met.=Metropolitan bishop; OL=overlordship; Ott.=Ottoman; p.o.=part of (the); reconstr.=reconstructed; TF=terraferma; Ven.=Venetian.

Earlier Venetian rule is only indicated (in brackets) if continuous with the early modern period.

III. *Motivations and Methods of Expansion*

Territories were acquired for various reasons, and acquisition was not the driving force of Venetian policy. On several occasions, Venice rejected proposals of voluntary submission by envoys of several towns and principalities. For example, Venice repudiated repeated attempts by the city of Patras, in the Peloponnese, to be part of the Venetian empire. The city of Cattaro had to appeal several times to the Venetian authorities before convincing them to take it under its rule.²⁴ According to Marin Sanudo (Marino Sanuto), Venice rejected in 1422 a proposal to occupy the entire Peloponnesus, brought by ambassadors of the Byzantine Empire, the despot of Morea, the despot of Epirus, and the Archbishop of Patras.²⁵ Such refusals were made on the basis of political, military, and economic considerations. But like other voluntary submissions that were accepted by Venice, they are typical of a certain period and resulted from specific circumstances that reigned in the area of the Aegean Sea, the Balkans, and the Ionian Islands. This model of voluntary surrender by small political units that were unable to survive on their own, particularly in the face of Ottoman advance, all but disappeared by the end of the 15th century.

Keeping the maritime lanes open to Venetian shipping was a central consideration of the Republic, and it often pushed it to seek control of islands, ports, and straits that would enable Venetian ships to sail safely and find services and supplies, as well as shelter, when needed. The old

Medieval Balkans (Ann Arbor, 1987); Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien (1392–1479)* (Munich, 2001); Giuseppe Praga, *History of Dalmatia* (Pisa, 1993); Monique O'Connell, *Men of Empire. Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore/London, 2009); David S. Chambers, *The Imperial Age of Venice 1380–1580* (London, 1970); Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 4 vols (Philadelphia, 1976–84), vols 2–4; Setton, *Venice, Austria and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1991); Giovanni I. Cassandro, "Contributo alla storia della dominazione veneta in Puglia," *Archivio Veneto* serie 5, vol. 17 (1935), 1–58; Vito Vitale, "L'impresa di Puglia degli anni 1528–1529," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* n.s., anno VII (1907), vol. 13, part 2, pp. 5–68; *ibid.*, vol. 14, parts 1–2, pp. 120–92, 324–51; William Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient* (Cambridge, 1921; repr. Chicago, 1967); David Jacoby, *La féodalité en Grèce médiévale. Les 'Assises de Romanie': sources, application et diffusion* (Paris/The Hague, 1971); Mayhew, *Dalmatia*; Ben J. Slot, *Archipelagus turbatus. Les Cyclades entre colonisation latine et occupation ottomane*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1982); and Marco Jačov, *Le guerre Veneto-Turche del XVII secolo in Dalmazia* (Venice, 1991) (*Atti e memorie della Società dalmata di storia patria*, vol. 20).

²⁴ Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," pp. 951–52; Reinhold C. Mueller, "Aspects of Venetian Sovereignty in Medieval and Renaissance Dalmatia," in Charles Dempsey, ed., *Quattrocento Adriatico. Fifteenth-Century Art of the Adriatic Rim* (Bologna, 1996), p. 31.

²⁵ Marin Sanudo, "Vitae ducum venetorum," in Ludovico Antonio Muratori, ed., *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, vol. 22 (Milan, 1733), p. 943.

image of the *stato da mar* as a chain of ports whose main function was to serve as infrastructure for Venice's commercial shipping is incomplete, but the support and development of maritime trade was a chief factor in the conduct of Venice's overseas policies. This was without any doubt one of the motivations for Venice's intervention in Cyprus in 1473–74, considering Cyprus' role in Venice's maritime trade in the eastern Mediterranean. Likewise, it must have been a crucial consideration that led to the conquest of Zante in 1482, in view of Zante's location at the entry to (or exit from) the Adriatic Sea. And this must also have been a central factor in deciding to occupy the Apulian port towns in the 1490s, taking into account their geopolitical position and their importance for the grain trade of southern Italy. In all these examples there was a danger that a rival power (the Kingdom of Naples or France) would gain control of these important sea lanes.

Strategic considerations also ranked high in the decision whether or not to occupy a certain territory. For example, the repeated refusals to accept Cattaro's submission (before finally approving it in 1420) must have been related to the evident difficulties in protecting this town, situated deep inside the long and narrow gulf bearing its name, the entrance of which was partly controlled by other powers. Indeed, one may wonder what made Venice decide to buy the town of Scutari, which could not be reached directly by sea-going vessels. Venetian galleys sent to defend it in 1474 could sail upstream the Boiana River only up to the Benedictine monastery of St. Sergius and Bacchus, wherefrom it was necessary to reach Lake Scutari by smaller boats. Despite Scutari's heroic resistance to repeated Ottoman attacks, it is no wonder that Venice finally agreed to surrender it as a price for a peace treaty that concluded its long war with Mehmed the Conqueror in 1479.²⁶ Venice's inland Albanian possessions—Scutari, Drivato, and even Alessio (situated at only 3 km from the sea)—were, in fact, the first in that area to be relinquished or lost.

The overseas colonies also served as components of Venice's elaborate information network, as can be observed by going through the *Diaries* of Marin Sanudo.²⁷ There were territories that held no economic importance (and were, rather, an economic burden) and hardly any military advantage, but which could serve as excellent posts of observation on the movement of ships and also on developments on nearby territories. The

²⁶ Schmitt, *Das Venezianische Albanien*, pp. 25–26, 612–28.

²⁷ Pierre Sardella, *Nouvelles et speculations à Venise au début du 16^e siècle* (Paris, 1948).

potential role of a territory as an information relay station was probably never a principle motivation for its occupation, but this factor may have played a role in the framework of a wider set of considerations.

A region's natural resources were, of course, of paramount importance when the possibility of acquisition arose. Venetian specialization in the exploitation of salt as a major economic instrument has been studied extensively, particularly in Jean-Claude Hocquet's numerous studies.²⁸ Grain supply, or access to grain supply from other regions, must have played a central role as well. Accepting the voluntary submission of Thessalonica in 1423 must have been related, for example, to the rich grain resources of Thessalia. This could also have been one of the considerations for the occupation of Cyprus.

Let us now move from motivations to tactics or methods of expansion. Voluntary submissions have already been mentioned in various contexts. The pattern was similar in most cases. If a territory was ruled by a family, the ruler who requested Venetian protection, or was convinced to do so, was normally promised a pension that would allow him or her to live comfortably without worrying about taxes, defense, and other such matters.²⁹ A down payment was another possible arrangement, as, for example in the case of some small localities in Dalmatia in the early 15th century.³⁰ These tactics could still work in the Quattrocento but disappeared entirely in the following century.

When negotiations for the inclusion of a new colony were conducted with a corporate body, such as a commune, the price was often in the form of pledges by Venice to maintain the local statutes and customs, generally with one important reserve: criminal law, the symbol of sovereignty, had to be that of Venice. Even if not always phrased explicitly, this was a basic principle applied throughout the overseas territories.³¹ Being the common framework that united all overseas colonies, this was the principal expression of the *Dominante's* dominion.

²⁸ Jean-Claude Hocquet, *Le sel et la fortune de Venise*, 2 vols (Lille, 1978–79).

²⁹ E.g., Maria d'Enghien, lady of Argos and Napoli di Romania (Nauplion), in the late 14th century, or the Dukagjin brothers, who ceded the Albanian town of Alessio in 1393 in return for a yearly pension; Giorgio Balša, who ceded Scutari and Drivasto to Venice in 1396, receiving the title of Venetian nobleman and the right to raise the flag of St Mark. See Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 419; Giuseppe Valentini, "Dell'amministrazione veneta in Albania," in Agostino Pertusi, ed., *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, 2 vols (Florence, 1973), vol. 1, part 2, pp. 843–910, pp. 850–51, notes.

³⁰ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 145.

³¹ G. Ortalli, "Il ruolo degli statuti tra autonomie e dipendenze: Curzola e il dominio veneziano," *Rivista storica italiana* (1986), 195–220; Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," p. 66.

Wherever international commerce was a predominant factor in gaining a foothold overseas, the Venetian presence could assume different forms, from that of a commercial colony with special privileges to full territorial rule, with intermediate forms not excluded. One such intermediate case was that of 15th-century Tana, located at the estuary of the Don River, on the northern shores of the Black Sea. The town was built and fortified by the Venetians with permission of the Tartar Khan of the Golden Horde, who received a yearly tribute and was entitled to receive 3 per cent of Tana's customs revenues. The colony was administered by a Venetian consul and enjoyed ample autonomy, with its own police force and its own soldiers and officers, including a port admiral.³²

Venice was sometimes ready to disburse great sums of money to secure its hold on a certain territory by purchasing dynastic rights, either before occupying a territory or afterwards, as an act of legalization. This practice reflects the power of dynastic claims during the early modern period, even when disputed by rival contenders. In the latter case, Venice preferred to be on the safe side by buying the pretended rights of all claimants, but the sums disbursed seem to have depended on the respective abilities to realize one's claim. For example, Venice was ready to pay 100,000 ducats to Ladislao of Naples for his right to rule Dalmatia, whereas his rival, Maximilian of Luxemburg, had to content himself with 10,000 gold ducats for his renunciation of the same claim.³³ Ladislao had already made a small fortune by selling in 1402 his rights on Corfu to the Republic for 30,000 ducats.³⁴

Similarly, Venice was always ready to solve territorial disputes by offering to pay a yearly sum, which the Ottomans, for example, interpreted as recognition of their overlordship. This was done on several instances in 15th-century Albania and Greece,³⁵ and also in Cyprus on two occasions: when formally taking over the island in 1489, Venice agreed to continue paying the tribute paid by the Lusignan kings to the Mamluks; and when the Mamluk sultanate was occupied by the Ottomans, the Republic agreed to transfer this obligation to Egypt's new rulers.³⁶ A similar arrangement

³² Elena C. Skržinkaja, "Storia della Tana," *Studi veneziani* 10 (1969), 3–45; Bernard Doumerc, "Les Vénitiens à La Tana au XV^e siècle," *Le Moyen Age* 94/3–4 (1988), 363–79.

³³ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, pp. 145–47.

³⁴ Eugenio Bacchion, *Il Dominio Veneto su Corfu (1386–1797)* (Venice, 1956), p. 31.

³⁵ Momčila Spremić, "I tributi veneziani nel Levante nel XV secolo," *Studi veneziani* 13 (1971), 221–52.

³⁶ George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1948–52), 3:823–24, 828.

followed the Venetian takeover of Zante in 1482.³⁷ In all these cases Venice bought security for cash. Not surprisingly, the money needed for these payments did not come from Venice but was paid out of the revenues of the respective overseas territories.

In the Venetian territories south of Ragusa, usually referred to as "Venetian Albania," Venice had to deal during most of the 15th century with local potentates and families who were in constant conflict with one another. The Balša, the Crnojević, the Thopia, the Kastrioti, and the Ducagjin were sometimes interested in receiving Venetian protection but could also change camps without scruple when it suited their interests. For Venice it was more comfortable to engage local armies than to send its own navy or land forces to fight in that rugged land. Considering the fickle nature of these alliances, the territories directly controlled by these lords could hardly be considered "Venetian." Nevertheless, in some cases, especially when Ottoman pressure increased or when some of these dynasties died out, Venice could gain a foothold in their strongholds. As in the Greek world, the circumstances characteristic of this phase of Ottoman expansion played into Venetian hands, since the area was greatly fragmented and partly ruled by local families that had no great chance to withstand an Ottoman attack and so were sometimes ready to receive a pension or other privileges in exchange for their small territories.

Not a few colonies, however, came under Venetian rule as a result of military conquest. This was the case of Lepanto in 1407; of several port towns in Dalmatia and Albania in the early 15th century, such as Antivari, Budua, Dulcigno, and Sebenico; of Zante and Cephalonia towards the end of the same century; to a certain extent also of Cyprus in 1473–74, although military presence, without any real fighting sufficed for securing Venice's hold there; of the Apulian towns in the 1490s; of the interior regions of Istria in 1508–09; of the Dalmatian fortress of Clissa during the war of Cyprus; of the islands of Santa Maura (Lefkada) and Aegina as well as the entire Morea (Peloponnese) in the 1680s; of Castelnovo (Herzeg Novi) and Risano in the Bocche di Cattaro as well as of the extended Dalmatian territories of the *Acquisto nuovo* during the Candia War (1645–69); and of the Dalmatian region of Imoschi (*Acquisto nuovissimo*) during the last war

³⁷ Ermanno Lunzi, *Della condizione politica delle Isole Jonie sotto il dominio veneto* (Venice, 1858), pp. 191–218; Marianna Kolyva-Karaleka, "Η Ζάκυνθος μεταξύ του Α' και του Γ' βενετοτουρκικού πολέμου. Συμβολή στην πολιτική ιστορία και στην ιστορία των θεσμών" (Ph.D. diss., University of Athens, 1989), pp. 26–38.

with the Ottomans (1715–18).³⁸ From around the early 16th century, there is a clear change in the modes of acquisition of new territories. Whereas previously, at least in some cases Venice had the option between several *modi operandi*—down payment, pension, diplomacy, military action, or some combination of these methods—from the early 16th century the expansion (and, of course, contraction) of Venice's overseas territories depended on one factor alone—military action. These were the iron centuries of the eastern Mediterranean, with Venice's *stato da mar* as a major protagonist of the numerous military confrontations in which Venice was engaged.

Rise and Decline

Modern historiography tends to depict the *stato da mar* as an enterprise in continuous decline from the late Middle Ages onwards. Decline is above all conceived in terms of size, but in this too there seems to be a misconception of historical realities with regard to the chronology of expansion and contraction. Thus, it has recently been suggested that the acquisition of Salonica in 1423 marked the end of Venice's great age of expansion on its maritime frontier,³⁹ and one scholar even implies that there was hardly any *stato da mar* left beyond the end of the 15th century.⁴⁰ Yet it is doubtful whether focusing on the loss of colonies and ignoring the addition of new ones is the right way of following the process of expansion and contraction.

The dynamics and dimensions of Venice's overseas empire are better understood by the consideration of two basic factors: the size of Venice's overseas colonies and the overall mass of population living there. By these standards, the 15th century can by no means be taken as a phase of contraction. As a matter of fact, the *stato da mar* reached its maximum size in territorial terms during the first years of the 16th century. This affirmation is based on the estimation of the comprehensive size the territories acquired between the 1470s and 1503 (Cyprus, Veglia, Zante, Cephalonia, Ithaca, and the Apulian port towns) compared to that of territories which

³⁸ Paul Pisani, "Les possessions vénitiennes de Dalmatie du XXV^e au XVII^e siècle," *Compte-Rendu du Congrès International des Sciences Géographiques* (Paris, 1890), p. 8.

³⁹ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 33.

⁴⁰ Bernard Doumerc, "Les Vénitiens confrontés au retour des repatriés de l'empire colonial d'outre-mer (fin XV^e–début XVI^e siècle)," in Michel Balard and Alain Ducelleir, eds., *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (X^e–XVI^e siècles)* (Paris, 2002), pp. 375–98.

were lost during the same years (Negroponte, Coron, Modon, Lepanto, Zonchio, Argos, Durazzo, and the Albanian inland towns).⁴¹

Moreover, considering the expansion and contraction in demographic terms, the apex of the *stato da mar*'s development must be pushed several decades further. The 16th century was a period of a significant population rise in the Mediterranean basin, including Venice itself and its maritime empire, and this *conjecture* concerned particularly the biggest overseas possessions—Cyprus and Crete, the two of which, on the eve of the Cyprus war, together had nearly 400,000 inhabitants. Therefore, even if the number of colonies declined in 1509 and continued to fall during the 1537–40 war with the Ottomans, the *stato da mar* reached its highest point in demographic terms on the eve of the Cyprus war, that is, in 1570.

The loss of Cyprus and then of Crete were tremendous blows to Venice's position as a Mediterranean power, and the conquest of the Peloponnese in the late 17th and early 18th century was a passing episode, although a few smaller colonies conquered in the course of the Cretan and the Peloponnesian wars remained under Venetian rule until the end of the Republic. But not many historians are aware of the expansion of Venice's dominions in Istria by approximately 20 per cent in 1509,⁴² as well as of the already mentioned widening of Venice's dominions in Dalmatia and Albania in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. From 1718 until the demise of the Republic in 1797, the long belt of Venetian possessions along the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea, which was not as slim as it had been during the 15th and 16th centuries, extended, together with the numerous Adriatic islands, down to the Ragusan border. Beyond Ragusa, Venice continued ruling, in the so-called "Venetian Albania," the enclave of Cattaro (also extended during the War of Candia) and that of Budua; the Ionian islands, including Corfu (with its mainland dependencies of Butrinto and Parga, and the island dependency of Paxos), Santa Maura or Lefkada (with its mainland dependencies of Prevesa and Vonitsa on both sides of the

⁴¹ Cyprus's area is 9251 km², that of Zante is 407 km², and that of Veglia (Krk) is 406 km². Negroponte (Evia) has 3684 km². For Coron and Modon, including their rural hinterland, I rely on Andrea Nanetti's information, according to which, at their maximum expansion in 1424, their area was roughly equivalent to that of today's municipality of Pylos-Nestoras, i.e., 552 km². Yet at the moment of their loss in 1500, their area was smaller. Cephalonia and Ithaca cover an area of about 900 km². The area of all other colonies lost during the war with the Ottomans concluded in 1503 must have been rather small. For caution's sake, being unable to assess the area controlled by the Apulian towns (lost in 1509) in comparison with the one conquered by Venice about the same time in Istria, I would place the zenith of Venice's expansion at 1503, the date of the peace treaty with the Ottomans.

⁴² Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 23.

entry to the Ambracian Gulf), Zante (Zakynthos), and Cephalonia (with its island dependency of Ithaca). Finally, Cerigo (Kythera) remained the farthest Venetian territory. This empire was definitely smaller than it was in the 16th century, but relatively easier to control, at least in terms of distance and space. Another characteristic was the relatively greater weight of the Dalmatian provinces and their Slavic subjects compared to the Greek ones in this last phase of the *stato da mar*'s history. Towards the end of Venice's existence as an independent state, the nearly half-million inhabitants of the Republic's overseas dominions were fewer by about 23 to 29 per cent compared to the level reached in 1570, and the relative weight of these *oltramaroni* in the overall population of the Venetian state had also declined.⁴³ Nevertheless, as will be seen presently, this somewhat weakened wing of St. Mark's lion still required a lot of attention by the *Dominante*.

IV. *Institutions of Administration and Control*

Unity and Diversity

Though ruled from the center by the same councils and according to the same principles, each one of Venice's overseas colonies had its own local institutions, which enabled indigenous elites to enjoy a certain measure of autonomy in the conduct of local affairs. The scope of this autonomy depended on the dimensions of the territory, on its distance from the metropolis, on the extent of colonization by Venice, and on the circumstances of inclusion in the Venetian dominions, as well as on institutional patterns that preceded the Venetian takeover. For example, Crete was conquered by force from Byzantium. Consequently, Byzantine institutional heritage was not given much space in the organization of Venetian Crete. By contrast, the Venetian takeover of Corfu was relatively peaceful, and local institutions were strongly marked by those of the previous regime.

Under Venetian rule, public life in the Dalmatian and Albanian towns continued in the framework of the pre-existing communal institutions. In the absence of active communal institutions, as, for example, in Cyprus,

⁴³ For the population of the overseas dominions in 1570, see Arbel, *Colonie d'oltremare*, p. 955; for the late eighteenth century, see Giuseppe Gullino, *Atlante Della Repubblica Veneta, 1790* (Sonno Campagna, 2007), pp. 28–29.

Venice allowed local elites to organize in councils that were granted authority to deal with local affairs under the supervision of the Venetian governors. In the Aegean Sea there were varying patterns and degrees of colonial control. Some territories were held by Venetian patricians under Venice's protection, others were formally part of the Duchy of the Archipelago (the Duchy of Naxos), but the Duchy itself, especially during the last century of its existence, was a Venetian protectorate. During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Duchy, which had been founded in 1207 by Marco Sanuto, was ruled by the Crispo family, which, though related to strong patrician families, was not Venetian itself. The dukes claimed to be the feudal overlords of other islands of the Aegean Archipelago, including those ruled by Venetian families, such as Serifos (partly, and from 1430 entirely, held by the Michiel), Paros (held by the Venier and later by the Sagredo), Antiparos (held by the Loredan and later by the Pisani), Nio (Ios, held by the Pisani between 1508–37), Amorgos (held by Venetian families from Crete, then by the Querini), Stampalia (Astipalaia, from 1413, held by the Querini), Santorini (held by the Barozzi and, from 1480, by the Pisani), Namfio (Anafi, held by the Brabaro between 1466–1528 and later, until 1537, by the Pisani), Gia (Kea, Keos, Tzia, held by the Premarin), and Scarpanto (Karpathos, held by the Corner). As from 1419 until the early 16th century, in their treaties with the Ottomans, the Venetians insisted on including a formal recognition on the part of the sultan of their overlordship of the Duchy of Naxos, whose rulers were to be treated as Venetians.⁴⁴ Moreover, until the Ottoman war of 1537–41, Venice nearly always refused to recognize the claims of the Dukes of the Archipelago to be suzerains of all the other Latin lords in the area and considered itself the supreme authority there, including over the Duchy of Naxos itself. Venice recognized the validity of feudal law of *Romania* in matters pertaining to rights of succession in these islands but insisted that claims in

⁴⁴ Georg Martin Thomas, *Diplomatarium veneto-levantinum*, 2 vols (Venice, 1880–99), 2:319 (1419), 2:345 (1430), 2:368 (1446), 2:383 (1451); Romanin, *Storia documentata*, 4:384 (1454); Diana G. Wright and Pierre Mackay, "When the Serenissima and the Gran Turco Make Love: The Peace Treaty of 1478," *Studi veneziani* 53 (2007), 273 (1478); Aldo Gallotta, "Il trattato turco-veneto del 12 gennaio 1482," *Studia turcologica memoriae Alexii Bombaci dicata* (Naples, 1982), p. 233 (1482); Sanudo, *I diarii*, 5:43; and Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu, "1503 Tarihli Türk-Venedik Andlaşması," *VIII Türk Tarih Kongresi III. Cilt'ten Ayırsın* (Ankara, 1983), pp. 1559–69, and illustrations on pp. 479–83. See also Camillo Manfroni, *I Colonizzatori italiani durante il medioevo e il Rinascimento, Vol. II: Dal Secolo XIV al XVI, con un appendice sulle vicende delle colonie veneziane fino al secolo XVIII*, 2 vols (Rome, 1933), p. 233; Slot, *Archipelagus*, pp. 38–39.

this regard should be decided in Venetian courts, where Venice's political interests could also be safeguarded.⁴⁵

Other Aegean territories, such as Negroponte as from 1390, Tinos and Mykonos after 1430, Aegina from 1451 onwards, and the Northern Sporades between 1453 and the late 1530s, were under direct Venetian rule. There were also hybrid arrangements. Tinos and Mykonos recognized Venetian sovereignty already in 1390, but Venice preferred for a few decades to send an official from Negroponte to rule these islands (together with Delos); then, in 1407 they were offered to Venetian noblemen who would be ready to rule these islands for a term of four years, still under the authority of the *Bailo* of Negroponte, paying a certain sum out of the local revenues to Venice. Only in 1430 did Venice integrate Tinos and Mykonos into the *Reggimento* system, which will be described presently.⁴⁶

The Reggimento System

Most territories of the *stato da mar* were under direct Venetian domination and were ruled by patrician governors who were elected in Venice's Great Council and sent overseas for a pre-established term of office—for most of them, two years. On their departure they received a written commission (*commissione*) that included all laws and decisions relevant to the magistracy they were going to exercise. All of them were required to be entirely devoted to the public interest and were forbidden from engaging in commerce, from marrying while in office, from receiving gifts or loans from their subjects, from using their official residence for personal purposes, and from exposing their coat of arms on the government palace. Other prohibitions concerned service of close relatives in the same *Reggimento* (college of governors), using family members to engage in trade, and nominating relatives to local offices. They were also forbidden from wearing mourning cloths and were not allowed to spend large sums of money on public festivals and charities.⁴⁷

The Venetian governors, or *Rettori*, as they were called, were expected to defend the interests and well-being of the Republic,⁴⁸ to care for its honor

⁴⁵ Jacoby, *La féodalité*, p. 308; see, for example, the Senate's decision of 1520 concerning the lordship of the island of Paros, *ibid.*, pp. 306–308, 330–33.

⁴⁶ Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, pp. 265–66.

⁴⁷ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 60–61.

⁴⁸ E.g. Igor Sevcenko, "Dogale pour Paul Contarini, Capitaine de Candie," *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 4 (1950), 271 (1975): "per la conservation et buon stato del Dominio nostro."

and profit⁴⁹ but also to act for the well-being of the territory entrusted to their care.⁵⁰ Before leaving Venice, the patrician elected for an overseas office as well as his chancellor had to take an oath in front of the heads of the Council of Ten to behave according to the orders specified in the written commission handed to them.⁵¹

Governors' titles varied. Crete had a duke (*duca*), Cyprus a *luogotenente*, Corfu and Durazzo a *bailo*, Veglia, Cephalonia, and Castelnovo—a *provveditore*. At Scutari and in Dulcigno there was a count and captain (*comes et capitaneus*), whereas Curzola, Lesina, Pago, and Trau had simply a count. There was a *podestà* at Antivari, Drivasto, and Malvasia, as well as in several Istrian provinces, and only a castellan (*castellanus*), a magistracy of lesser importance, on 15th-century Cerigo. Titles sometimes changed, as in the case of Cerigo in 1504, or in 16th-century Corfu.⁵² In the bigger territories, such as Cyprus or Crete, the chief governor was flanked by two counselors and one or two financial officers (*camerlenghi*). Smaller colonies had no *camerlenghi*, and one of the counselors had to deal with financial affairs. The chief governor and his counselors constituted the "Regime" (*Reggimento*), which had to make any significant decision by majority vote. In the greater territories, or those considered of special importance, such as Cyprus, Crete, or Zara, military affairs were placed under the responsibility of a separate magistrate, mostly with the title of *capitano*, but in the smaller ones, the *rettor* (rector, or governor) also functioned in this capacity. Important castles were entrusted to Venetian castellans. In trying to save expenses on salaries of magistrates, the Republic sometimes united some of these functions in one person. In Zara, for example, the functions of *Camerlengo* and Castellan were merged into a single magistracy from 1609.⁵³

Crete constituted a special case, for its colonial administration had been established in the early 13th century according to the Venetian

⁴⁹ Chryssa Maltezou, ed., *Ire debeas in rettorem Caneae. La commissio del doge di Venezia al rettore di Canea, 1589* (Venice, 2002), p. 41 (commission of Pier Francesco Malipiero, rector of Canea, 1589): "tractabis et operabis honorem et proficuum Venetiarum."

⁵⁰ Ibid.: "ordinandum et utile faciendum pro bono Venetiarum et insulae Cretae."

⁵¹ Marco Folin, "Spunti per una ricerca su amministrazione veneziana e società ionia nella seconda metà del Settecento," in *Studi veneti offerti a Gaetano Cozzi* (Venice, 1992), p. 337.

⁵² For some partial lists of colonial magistrates, see Charles Hopf, *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues* (Paris, 1873), pp. 371–413; Andrea Da Mosto, *L'Archivio di Stato. Indice generale, storico, descrittivo ed analitico*, 2 vols (Rome, 1937), 2:15–23 (rather inaccurate); and O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 161–64.

⁵³ Angelo De Benvenuti, *Storia di Zara dal 1409 al 1797* (Milan, 1944), p. 198.

model, with institutions and magistracies that bore names similar to the Venetian ones: the duke (*duca*), the Great Council, the Senate, the Council of Ten, the *Avvoraria di comun*, the *Signori di notte*, the *Curia di petition*, etc.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the Venetian administration in Crete functioned in the same way as other colonies governed by a *Reggimento*, and like other big overseas territories, it also had separate governors for provincial centers—in La Canea, Rettimo, and Sitia, with their respective counselors (except for the last-mentioned).⁵⁵ Patricians who resided in Crete were occasionally also elected to local colonial magistracies.⁵⁶

The salaries of magistrates varied according to the size and importance of the territory entrusted to their care. During the 16th century, the salaries of the *luogotenente* of Cyprus and the *capitano* of Famagusta were the highest among the magistracies of the overseas territories and among the highest in the entire Venetian state. Only very experienced patricians occupied these functions, which were, of course, also important positions in the Venetian *cursus honorum*.⁵⁷ In addition to their salaries, Venetian officials were also entitled to receive portions of judicial fines, of taxes, and other kinds of revenues.⁵⁸

In case of death or indisposition of the chief governor, the elder counselor took charge as an acting senior governor, and one of the financial officers stepped in as interim counselor. A similar system functioned in the other magistracies. The standard term of office had often to be prolonged, since no magistrate was allowed to leave his post before the arrival of his successor.

During the 15th century, smaller *Reggimenti*, with one or two officials, such as those of Brazza, Dulcigno, Egina, Malvasia, or the castellanies of Istria, comprised more than one-third of all offices. Patricians who were

⁵⁴ Chryssa Maltezou, "The Historical and Social Context," in David Holton, ed., *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 20.

⁵⁵ For offices in Crete during the 16th and 17th centuries, see Aspasia Papadaki, "Αξιόματα στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη κατά το 16ο και 17ο αιώνα," *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 26 (1986), 99–135.

⁵⁶ E.g., Girolamo Corner, *Capitano grande* in 1526–28, in Anastasia Papadia-Lala, *Αγροτικές ταραχές και εξεγέρσεις στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη (1509–1528). Η "επανάσταση" του Γεωργίου Γαδανολέου-Λυσσογιώργη* (Ph.D. diss., University of Athens, 1983), pp. 107–08. For minor offices, see O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 78.

⁵⁷ Benjamin Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 5: *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, eds. Tenenti and Tucci, p. 972 and n. 94. Until 1509, the yearly salary of each one of the two magistrates reached 3500 ducats; it was later reduced to 2000 ducats. For the salaries of magistrates who served in 15th-century Dalmatia, see Mueller, "Aspects of Venetian Sovereignty," p. 34.

⁵⁸ E.g., Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe," p. 114.

elected to these positions or to the subordinate offices in larger colonies, such the castellanies in Famagusta and Crete, were less experienced and probably also belonged to less affluent families.⁵⁹

Quite often, a *provveditore*, an office with extraordinary powers, was nominated for an *ad hoc* mission, as, for example, immediately following the inclusion of a territory in the maritime empire or when a need arose to carry out a thorough reordering of the administration or of local institutions. In some cases rectors obtained powers of *provveditore* without bearing this title.⁶⁰ With the increasing load of military responsibilities, the *provveditore* tended to become a permanent magistracy, as in the case of Corfu, where the office of *Provveditore e Capitano* emerged in the course of the 16th century.⁶¹ A similar phenomenon can be followed in the two big colonies of Cyprus and Crete, where *provveditori generali* appear frequently (though not always) as a supreme authority over the pre-existing governorships of the *Luogotenente*, the *Duca* the *Capitano*, and the various *rettori* of the provincial towns.⁶²

Some overseas territories had small dependencies: the *bailo* of Negroponte was also responsible for Fitileo (Pteleon), Tinos, and Mykonos; the castellan of Coron and Modon was also responsible for the island of Sapienza, and briefly for Athens; the *bailo* of Durazzo had authority over Alesio; the governors of Corfu were responsible for the island of Paxo, as well as for the mainland dependencies of Butrinto and Parga, and for a while also for Bastià. The islands of Scarpanto (Karpathos), Cerigo (Kythera) and Cerigotto (Antikythera), as well as Tinos, were under the supervision of the Venetian administration in Crete following the conquest of Negroponte by the Ottomans in 1470 and until the fall of Crete itself.⁶³

In several cases, Venice authorized local communities to elect the governors of the small dependencies. The governors of Butrinto, Parga, bastià

⁵⁹ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 43. The claim that in the early 16th century such minor offices were sought after by numerous impoverished patricians has been subject to criticism. See Volker Hunecke, "Matrimonio e demografia del patriziato veneziano (secc. XVII–XVIII)," *Studi veneziani* 21 (1991), 278–79; and Andrea Zannini, "L'impiego pubblico," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, eds. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, p. 437.

⁶⁰ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 47–48.

⁶¹ Gerassimos D. Pagratis, ed., *Οι εκθέσεις των βενετών βασιλίων και προνοητών της Κέρκυρας (16ος αιώνας)* (Athens, 2008), pp. 18–19.

⁶² Da Mosto, *L'Archivio di Stato*, pp. 18, 23.

⁶³ Jacoby, *La féodalité*, p. 210; Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," p. 971.

and Paxo were elected in the Community Council of Corfu,⁶⁴ and those of Ithaca (in the Venetian sources: Teachi), were elected by the Council of Cephalonia as from 1563.⁶⁵ Almissa was governed by a commander selected from among the professional soldiers of Spalato, and the rural republic of Poglizza was under the authority of an itinerant magistrate, the *conte*, who was nominated from among the noblemen of Spalato.⁶⁶ In very few cases, the inhabitants of the minor centers succeeded in obtaining self-government. Following complaints by the representatives of Ithaca about the ineptitude of the Cephalonian Captains, the Republic agreed at some point in the 17th century to let the people of Ithaca elect two “elders” from their own ranks, to hold sway by themselves.⁶⁷

Cyprus had no dependencies, but Venice authorized the *università* of Nicosia to elect from among its ranks several district governors, such as the *capitano* of Limassol, and the *civitani* of Chrysochou, Pendaya, Mazoto and Avdimou. Two other district governorships, the *capitano* of Sivouri and the *bailo* of Carpas, were also manned by Cypriots, but were nominated by the Venetian captain of Famagusta from among the citizens of that town.⁶⁸

Venetian colonial magistrates were flanked by a staff of *ministri*, most of whom were supposed to come from Venice or from other Venetian territories. They included a secretary, a chancellor, a bookkeeper, and an officer (*cavaliere*). Between 1636 and 1709, and again from 1743 onwards, these offices, like all other bureaucratic offices in the Venetian state, except for a few senior ones, were offered for sale.⁶⁹ This was undoubtedly one of the weaknesses of Venice's colonial administration. In many colonies, some key positions of the bureaucracy were held by local citizens, who

⁶⁴ Constantin N. Sathas, ed., *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au Moyen Age*, 9 vols (Paris, 1880–90), 3:465–66; Eugenio Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù (1386–1797)* (Venice, 1956), p. 58. In 1513, Paxo was sold as a fief to the Abrami and Morello families; see Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 347–48; and Pagratis, ed., *Oi εκθέσεις*, pp. 340, 436.

⁶⁵ Marino and Nicolo Pignatorre, *Memorie storiche e critiche dell'isola di Cefalonia, dai tempi eroici alla caduta della Repubblica Veneta*, 2 vols (Corfu, 1887–89), 1:120–21; William Miller, *The Latins in the Levant* (New York, 1908), p. 557; Lunzi, *Della condizione*, p. 348; Kostas T. Tsiknakis, ed., *Oi εκθέσεις των βενετών προνοητών της Κεφαλονίας (16ος αιώνας)* (Athens, 2008), p. 123 (1590).

⁶⁶ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 157; Pederin, “Die venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe,” p. 128.

⁶⁷ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, p. 350; Miller, *The Latins*, p. 557.

⁶⁸ Benjamin Arbel, “Η Κύπρος υπό ενετική κυριαρχία,” in Theodore Papadopoulos, ed., *Ιστορία της Κύπρου*, vol. 4/A (Nicosia, 1995), pp. 469–70.

⁶⁹ Marco Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto comune e veneto*, 10 vols (Venice, 1778–81), 1:345–47.

obviously tended to have personal and local interests that differed from those of the Venetians or even of their own countrymen.⁷⁰

Central Control and Regional Organization

From 1396 colonial inspectors, or *sindici*, were supposed to be sent on tours across Venice's overseas territories at four-year intervals. On their arrival to a given colony, public proclamations were made, inviting local subjects to lodge complaints against any magistrate or public officer. The *sindici* were authorized to conduct investigations and collect evidence that was then presented to the *avvogadori*, or state attorneys, in Venice. They sometimes took Venetian governors prisoner along with them to Venice to be put to trial.⁷¹ The functions and title of a *sindico* could be coupled with other titles and assignments, as in the case of Giacomo Foscarini, who was sent in 1574 to Crete to carry out a thorough reform of the colonial administration, as *Provveditore Generale* (with the powers of a *capitano generale*), *Sindico e Inquisitore*. He performed this task during his long stay on the island, which lasted more than three years, starting from the autumn of 1574.⁷² His measures were related to nearly all aspects of local life: defense, economy, religion, food supply, the organization of the rural society, etc.⁷³ No wonder that such missions "left a bitter cocktail of resentment and grievances in their wake" and that the syndics themselves were sometimes accused of—and even convicted of—malfeasance.⁷⁴

During the 15th century the *stato da mar* was still extremely fragmented in nature. Each colony, including the smallest ones, was directly dependent on the central organs of government, normally the Senate and the Council of Ten. From the 16th century onward, there was a tendency to encompass several territorial units within a larger regional authority of

⁷⁰ E.g., Pagratis, ed., *Oi εκθέσεις*, p. 175; Benjamin Arbel, "A Fresh Look at the Venetian Protectorate of Cyprus (1474–1489)," in Sabine Rogge and Candida Syndikus, eds., *Cyprus and Venice in the Era of Caterina Cornaro* (Münster, 2012), forthcoming.

⁷¹ Bacchion, *Il Dominio veneto su Corfù*, pp. 210–11; O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 123; Alfredo Viggiano, *Lo specchio della Repubblica. Venezia e il governo delle Isole Ionie nel '700* (Verona, 1998), pp. 119–33, 139–51.

⁷² Sterios G. Spanakis, "Η θρησκευτικό-εκκλησιαστική κατάσταση στην Κρήτη του XVI αιώνα," *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 21 (1969), 136 n. 5; Zvi Ankori, "Giacomo Foscarini and the Jews of Crete: A Reconsideration," *Michael* 7 (1981), 9–118, repr. in *Studi veneziani* 9 (1985), 10, 14 n. 17, 16 n. 24.

⁷³ Spiridonos M. Theotokis, "Ιάκωβος Φωσκαρίνης ή η Κρήτη το 1570," *Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Κρητικών Σπουδών* 1 (1938), 186–206; Ankori, "Giacomo Foscarini"; Roberto Zago, "Foscarini, Giacomo," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 49 (Rome, 1997), pp. 365–70.

⁷⁴ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 135–39.

a *provveditore generale*. Zara was already declared as the chief town of Venetian Dalmatia in 1450, and its governor had a certain authority over other Venetian administrators in this region.⁷⁵ In 1511, the *Provveditore Generale in Damazia e Albania*, who resided in Zara, became the senior regional governor, whose title could occasionally even be expanded, as in the case of the *Proveditor Generale in Istria, Dalmazia, Albania, Golfo et Isole di Levante con auttorità di Capitan General da Mar* (the title given in 1622 to Giust'Antonio Belegno).⁷⁶ A few subordinate, but still regional, magistracies were later established under his authority: the *Provveditore alle Isole della Dalmazia*, a magistracy established in 1539, the *Provveditore Generale della Cavalleria*, who was active in the region between 1520 and 1694,⁷⁷ or the *Provveditore Straordinario delle Isole del Levante*, a title borne by Niccolò Erizzo, sent in 1787 to the Ionian islands to put in order the local civic councils.⁷⁸ Finally, a *Provveditorre Starordinario* was elected to deal with the Venetian possessions beyond the Narenta (Neretva) valley or, in other terms, south of the territories ruled by Ragusa (the so-called "Albania Veneta").⁷⁹

The *Provveditore Generale da Mar*, in addition to his function as the supreme commander of the fleet in peacetime, appears as the highest authority of the Ionian Islands during the first half of the 16th century, first as a temporary appointment and later as a permanent one called *Provveditore Generale del Levante*.⁸⁰ His seat was in Corfu. From the mid-16th century onwards, when the *Provveditore Generale da Mar* was busy in commanding the fleet, a *Provveditore Generale delle Tre Isole*, with supreme authority over Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia, was established as a temporary magistracy. This temporary magistracy became more stable during the long period of the war of Candia. The office was later abolished but was revived in 1684 under the title of *Provveditore Generale delle Quattro Isole* (following the conquest of Santa Maura), and it continued to function throughout the war of Morea. Obviously, it had mainly military responsibilities.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe," pp. 117, 121.

⁷⁶ Nicolas Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis: l'avènement et l'affirmation de la citoyenneté corfiote (XVI^e–XVII^e siècles)* (Frankfurt, 1992), p. 157 n. 1.

⁷⁷ Da Mosto, *L'Archivio di Stato*, p. 18.

⁷⁸ Viggiano, *Lo specchio*, pp. 11, 17 n. 33.

⁷⁹ Paladini, 'Un caos che spaventa,' pp. 35–36, 62; Paladini, "Paterni tiranni," p. 185.

⁸⁰ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 253–54.

⁸¹ Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, pp. 19, 158–59. After the loss of Crete, Cerigo also came under the responsibility of this *provveditore generale*, but apparently he rarely

Following the conquest of the entire Peloponnese in the 1680s, the newly acquired province was entrusted to the senior governorship of a *Provveditore Generale*, who resided at Napoli di Romania (Nauplion). The peninsula was divided into four provinces (Romania, Acaja, Messenia, and Laconia), with respective centers at Napoli di Romania, Patraso, Navarino, and Malvasia (Monemvasia).⁸² At this stage, the system of regional organization had already become a normal pattern.

Unlike the governors of single territories, whose term of office was normally two years, the *provveditori generali* remained in office for three years, which further enhanced their power and authority. They gradually became the highest judicial authority in the areas entrusted to them, and, to a certain extent, substituted for the Signory as a supreme judicial instance to which local subjects could revert for help against misconduct of local governors, a process that eventually led to the weakening of the local governors' authority over the inhabitants of the respective colonies.⁸³

A similar tendency toward to a more integrated regional system, but without the strong military traits encountered in other parts of the empire, can be perceived in the development of Venice's administration in Istria.⁸⁴ The peninsula began to be regarded as a "province" in the late 16th century, with the establishment in 1584 of the *Podestà e Capitano* of Capodistria as head of the provincial court of second instance, with authority over local governors who served in 16 (out of 18) other *podesterie* of the peninsula (and from 1589, and also over that of the islands of Cherso and Ossero).⁸⁵ However, two other Istrian districts, that of Pinguento (Raspo) and that of Pirano (the second town in order of importance) remained subject to the *Capitano* of Raspo (at Pinguento), who was also responsible for the peasant militias, for the forests, and during a few decades until the 1660s–70s, for the colonization of uncultivated lands, mainly by immigrants from Dalmatia. Like in other provinces, in times of war or plague special *provveditori* were elected with extraordinary powers to deal with the situation. Yet this general tendency of concentrating authority in the hands of senior magistrates was here limited to certain spheres and did not reach a comprehensive integration. Thus, for example, in the area

performed his tour of inspection in that island, leaving it to the *Capitano delle Navi*; see William Miller, "The Ionian Islands under Venetian Rule," *English Historical Review* (1903), 209–39, repr. in Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, p. 214.

⁸² Manfroni, *I colonizzatori italiani*, 2:289–90.

⁸³ Paladini, *Un caos che spaventa*, pp. 36–38.

⁸⁴ Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 36–37, 39–40, 42–44.

of food supply, each Istrian district continued to act independently.⁸⁶ In the following century, however, the *provveditore* was also empowered to control the accounts of local governorships.⁸⁷

While in office, Venetian governors were required to inform the central organs of government about developments in the territories that were entrusted to their care. They usually did so quite frequently, sending *dispacci* to the Senate (actually to the Signory) and to the Heads of the Council of Ten on a regular basis. Since they were forbidden from taking any significant decision without prior approval from Venice, the correspondence had also an operative aspect. In colonies situated at a great distance from Venice, governors were occasionally constrained to take decisions without being able to wait for instructions from Venice, or even to take decisions that contradicted explicit instruction received from the center.⁸⁸ When making a decision related to a specific territory, the Senate or the Council of Ten normally did it on the basis of written opinions presented by current officials in the colony, experts in the field, or former governors of the same territory.

From about 1480, the Council of Ten assumed a growing influence on the administration of the *stato da mar* (as part of its general growing control over Venetian affairs), a trend that is reflected in the intensive correspondence between the heads of this council and the governors of Venice's maritime possessions. Another symptom of this development is the requirement, as from 1518, that returning governors and ambassadors should hand over to the heads of the Council of Ten the correspondence kept by them during their term of office.⁸⁹

Like any other governor in the Venetian state, on their return from their two to three years of service in the overseas empire, the *rettori* were required, as from 1524, to present to the *Collegio* a written report (*relazione*) about their activities. Alongside the weekly, and sometimes daily, dispatches they had sent during their term of office, these final reports are precious sources for the study of our subject, but they were also useful in early modern Venice, particularly for future governors who wished

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 41, 82–3.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 27–29.

⁸⁸ E.g., the decision of the governors of Cyprus in 1509 to refrain from exporting grains to Venice, despite orders from the Council of Ten in this regard; see Benjamin Arbel, "Sauterelles et mentalités. Le cas de la Chypre vénitienne," *Annales ESC* 44.5 (1989), 1057, repr. in Arbel, *Cyprus*, article no. XI.

⁸⁹ Raimondo Morozzo della Rocca and Maria Francesca Tiepolo "Cronologia veneziana del '500," in *La civiltà veneziana del Rinascimento* (Florence, 1958), p. 211.

to prepare themselves for their service abroad. Returning governors also presented proposals regarding the territories in which they had served.⁹⁰

Moreover, like any magistrate in the Venetian state who managed public money, the ex-governor also had to present a copy of the account books of his governorship to officials entrusted with the control of public finance. In 1433, this charge was transferred from *ufficiali alle rason vecchie* to the *governatori alle entrate*. A new office of general financial control, the *revisori alla scrittura* (later called *revisori e regolatori alla scrittura*), was established in 1575, to which patricians who had served in the maritime empire had to present their account books within one month after their return to Venice.⁹¹ Without a written attestation (*bollettino*) by the *revisori*, patricians could not be elected to other offices, a prohibition later changed to the inability to receive the commission for their new post.⁹² During the 18th century, all the treasuries (*casse*) throughout the Venetian dominions were required to send to the *deputati e aggiunti alla provision del denaro pubblico* (an office established in the 1650s) monthly reports (*ristretti*) on their revenues and expenditures, and also four-month financial reports (*rendiconti*) to the *revisori e regolatori*.⁹³ However, it appears that despite its rich experience in colonial administration and the great efforts invested in controlling the financial bureaucracy, the Republic had great difficulty in controlling this important component of colonial rule and, consequently, in preventing disorder and corruption in the administration of its colonies.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 89 n. 98. See also Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe," pp. 152–59.

⁹¹ Maria Francesca Tiepolo, "Archivio di Stato di Venezia," in *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato italiani*, 4 vols (Rome, 1981–94), 4:944, 948; Zannini, *Il sistema di revisione*, pp. 18–23; Zannini, "Problemi di contabilità pubblica e di amministrazione finanziaria nel governo veneziano della Morea e delle Isole Ionie," in Massimo Costantini and Aliki Nikiforou, eds., *Levante veneziano. Aspetti della storia delle Isole Ionie al tempo della Serenissima* (Rome, 1996), pp. 86–96.

⁹² Andrea Zannini, "Il Ministro 'assoluto disponente.' Mediazione burocratica e corruzione nelle Camere fiscali ionie," in Massimo Costantini, ed., *Il Mediterraneo centro-orientale tra vecchie e nuove egemonie* (Rome, 1998), p. 121.

⁹³ Fabio Besta, "Appunti sulla compilazione dei bilanci generali di fatto," in Fabio Besta, ed., *Bilanci generali della Repubblica di Venezia*, 4 vols (Venice, 1912–72), 3:xxiv–xxv, xxix–xlvi, lxxx–xciv; Angelo Ventura, "Il problema storico dei Bilanci Generali della Repubblica Veneta," in Angelo Ventura, ed., *Bilanci generali*, vol. 4: *Bilanci dal 1756 al 1783* (Padua, 1972), pp. xviii–xix, cxxx. For earlier attempts in this regard, see Besta, "Appunti," pp. ix–xxiv.

⁹⁴ Zannini, "Problemi di contabilità," pp. 90–93; Zannini, "Il Ministro 'assoluto disponente,'" pp. 89–92; Zannini, *Il sistema di revisione*, pp. 152–53; for a more general discussion of these problems, see Ventura, "Il problema storico," pp. xi–cxxxvi.

V. *Colonial Justice*

The Venetian system of justice played a leading role in maintaining social and political stability. The Republic emphasized the idea of a regime offering justice to all its subjects. Unity and diversity were combined in the imperial system of justice, representing the two jurisdictional spheres: criminal justice, in which Venetian magistrates had an exclusive right to decide; and civil justice, where local traditions were maintained in various forms and degrees and where judicial administration was left in the hands of local judges as a first instance.⁹⁵ The exclusive right of the Venetian magistrates in the *stato da mar* to deal with criminal cases stands in blatant contrast to the situation in the *terraferma* where, in several important centers, criminal justice remained in the hands of local judges (usually local noblemen) as courts of a first instance, a situation that greatly favored local potentates and weakened Venetian authority.⁹⁶ In some overseas colonies, local judges assisted the Venetian magistrate in adjudicating criminal trials, but only as counselors. The final sentence was the exclusively prerogative of the Venetian magistrate.⁹⁷

Venice often presented itself as the successor of former regimes, and that necessarily implied recognition of former legal arrangements and institutions, unless in blatant disharmony with Venetian rule.⁹⁸ Crete was an exception, probably because at the time of its conquest Venice may have been guided by fear of a Byzantine revival. Therefore, according to a 13th-century oath required by judges in Crete, the sources of law were first of all the statutes of Venice; then, if no answer could be found in them, by precedents. Only in the third place in the hierarchy of legal sources are

⁹⁵ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," pp. 33, 38; Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung . . . und ihre Organe," p. 151.

⁹⁶ Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*, pp. 440–46.

⁹⁷ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," pp. 64–69.

⁹⁸ In 14th-century Crete, as successor of the Byzantine emperor, see Chryssa Malteizou, "Byzantine 'Consuetudines' in Venetian Crete," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995), 269–80; for Cyprus, see Arbel, *H Κύπρος*, pp. 460–66; for Corfu, Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 109–115; for former Byzantine territories in general, David Jacoby, "From Byzantium to Latin Romania: Continuity and Change," in Benjamin Arbel, Bernard Hamilton, and David Jacoby, eds., *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London, 1989), pp. 1–44, repr. in Jacoby, *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean* (Aldershot, 2001), article no. VIII; for feudal law, David Jacoby, "Les 'Assises de Romanie' et le droit vénitien dans les colonies vénitiennes," in Agostino Pertusi, ed., *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XVI*, 2 vols (Florence, 1973), vol. I–1, pp. 347–60, repr. in Jacoby, *Recherches sur la Méditerranée orientale du XII^e au XV^e siècle. Peuples, sociétés, économies* (London, 1979), article no. IV.

mentioned "the approved local customs." The fourth and last possibility was passing judgment according to the judge's good conscience.⁹⁹

By contrast, in other territories local customs had precedence in civil cases. Such was the situation, for instance, in Negroponte, where Venetian laws were meant to constitute a complementary element.¹⁰⁰ In Scutari the community had to be ruled, "as far as possible," according to its own statutes, ordinances, and customs, provided that the respect of God and the honor of Venice remained unharmed. And when it would seem fit to act differently, or when local laws did not provide any satisfactory solution, decisions had to be guided by the governor's sense of justice and Christian piety.¹⁰¹ Similar qualifications can be found in the instructions to the governors of 15th-century Zara,¹⁰² as well as in other Adriatic colonies such as Cattaro, Antivari, Dulcigno, Alessio, and Drivasto.¹⁰³

The "old customs" according to which Venetian governors were required to rule belonged to a great variety of judicial traditions. Byzantine legal principles were sometimes implemented without explicit reference to them.¹⁰⁴ In Corfu, the pact of submission confirmed by the Senate in 1386 stated that the Corfiots would continue living according to their "good and time-honored customs," i.e., the privileges enjoyed by individuals and groups under the rule of the Angevin dynasty of Naples, reserving at the same time for Venice the right to modify local customs and for Venetian magistrates to rule according to Venetian law.¹⁰⁵ In Tinos, Venice recognized both the *Assises of Romania* in the feudal sphere as well as the statutes dating from the rule of the Ghisi family, by whom the island had been governed for nearly two centuries before the Venetian takeover.¹⁰⁶ In Negroponte, the process of Venetian appropriation of the entire island was completed in 1390, when the rectors were required to rule the island

⁹⁹ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," pp. 32–33.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 37–38.

¹⁰¹ Giuseppe Valentini, "Appunti sul regime degli stabilimenti veneti in Albania nel secolo XIV e XV," *Studi veneziani* 8 (1966), 220.

¹⁰² Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," p. 72: *dummodo sint secundum deum et iustitiam et honorem nostrum*.

¹⁰³ Gherardo Ortalli, "Gli statuti, tra Scutari e Venezia," in Lucia Nadin, ed., *Statuti di Scutari dalla prima metà del secolo XIV con le addizioni fino al 1469* (Rome/Viella, 2002), p. 17; Cesare Augusto Levi, *Venezia e il Montenegro—Giorgio Czernovich—Antivari 1443–1494—Stefano Mali il finto Czar e gli ultimi Conati della Repubblica* (Venice, 1896), p. 47.

¹⁰⁴ Jacoby, *La féodalité*, pp. 292–93; Maltezou, "Byzantine 'consuetudines,'" pp. 271–72 (focusing on the 14th and early 15th centuries).

¹⁰⁵ Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis*, pp. 52–58.

¹⁰⁶ Miller, *The Latins*, p. 632; Jacoby, *La féodalité*, p. 241 (1565).

"according to custom." Several decades had to pass, however, before a committee of 12 local inhabitants was charged to collect "the customs of the Empire of *Romania*," which had to be sent to Venice and serve for preparing a legal code that would be approved by the Senate. This project was completed in 1453, and the same code was also introduced into other Aegean islands, the Peloponnese and Corfu, where it was only abolished by Napoleon.¹⁰⁷

In the 15th-century pacts of submission signed with the Dalmatian towns, Venice also recognized local statutes and customs, subject to confirmation by the Venetian Senate. The statutes of the Dalmatian communes were, at least partly, similar to those which had regulated local life during the former period Venetian rule, which ended in 1358 with the Hungarian occupation. Thus in Zara, the Venetian magistrates were assisted by four local ones in civil cases. In criminal cases, as everywhere else, the Venetian magistrates had an exclusive right to decide.¹⁰⁸

In Cyprus as well, local legal customs and judicial institutions (except for the *haute cour*, abolished by Venice owing to its political role) were left intact. Venice saw fit to codify ancient Cypriot customs, by printing in Venice in 1535 the *Assises* of the old High Court and those of the burghers, to avoid confusion in the colonial administration of justice.¹⁰⁹ In Famagusta, the Republic was even ready to recognize the statutes that regulated life in that town during its occupation by Genoa (1373–1464).¹¹⁰ Venetian governors were required to apply Venetian legal principles whenever Cypriot laws did not offer a clear solution and, in the lack of solution in Venetian laws, to exercise their own discretion (*arbitrium*).¹¹¹ This *arbitrium* was a cardinal element in a gradual and continuous impregnation of local law by Venetian judicial practice, which was characterized by great pragmatism and flexibility.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Jacoby, *La féodalité*, pp. 95–113, 211, 258–59, 268–270, 303–308; Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," pp. 35–36; Spyros Asonitis, "L'introduzione delle Assise di Romania a Corfù," in Massimo Costantini and Aliko Nikiforou, eds., *Levenate veneziano. Aspetti di storia delle Isole Ione al tempo della Serenissima* (Rome, 1996), pp. 59–75.

¹⁰⁸ Gaetano Cozzi, "Politica, società, Istituzioni," in Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia, nell'età moderna. Dalla guerra di Chioggia al 1517* (Turin, 1986), pp. 195–201.

¹⁰⁹ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," pp. 39–42.

¹¹⁰ Benjamin Arbel, "L'eredità genovese a Cipro, 1464–1571," in Laura Balletto, ed., *Oriente e Occidente fra medioevo ed età moderna. Studi in onore di Geo Pitarino*, 2 vols (Genoa, 1997), 1:21–40, repr. in Arbel, *Cyprus*, article no. XIII.

¹¹¹ Arbel, "Η Κύπρος," p. 462.

¹¹² For the difficulties involved in using *arbitrium*, see O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 80.

Zante presents an interesting case, since when Venice occupied the island it had no communal institutions, and seemingly also no written statutes. The solution found at that moment was simple, reminiscent of the practice in later colonial empires: the governors were simply instructed to use the *capitoli* of Lepanto when faced with issues related to the administration of the new colony.¹¹³

The dependency on Venetian legal principles in the civil sphere was much weaker wherever local judges presided over local courts. This situation may have obtained, for example in the case of the *prosopo* judges, responsible for civil cases involving Greeks and Jews (active in the three main Cretan towns of Candia, Rettimo, and La Canea), or in the viscount's court and the court of the Syrians in Cyprus.¹¹⁴ This situation also obtained in the Jewish rabbinical courts, whose rulings were recognized by Venice, as by many other rulers, wherever Jewish communities existed.¹¹⁵

The respect for local legal traditions was confined to those subjects who were permanent residents of the respective colonies. Thus, for example, in Zara, in controversies involving Venetians or subjects of other Venetian territories as well as foreigners, the Venetian count had exclusive right to adjudicate the case.¹¹⁶

In a few areas, such as in late 17th- and early 18th-century Morea, on Santa Maura, as well as in the areas of the *Acquisto Nuovo e Novissimo* in Dalmatia, all of them acquired (and partly lost) in a late phase of Venetian expansion, the preceding legal and judicial organization was the Ottoman one. In these regions, Venice never considered the possibility of recognizing the former legal and judicial arrangements (i.e., Islamic law). As emphasized by Andrea Zannini, these cases, in which the Republic was faced with a rare opportunity, at an advanced stage of its colonial experience, to establish from scratch a new legal and institutional order, allow us to have an idea of what the Venetian ruling classes conceived as a proper form of government.¹¹⁷ This peculiar situation could lead

¹¹³ Marianna Kolyvā, "Obedir et essequir tutti l'infrascritti capitoli. I Capitoli dell'isola di Zante durante il dominio veneziano (fine XV–fine XVII sec.)," in Maltezou, Tzavara, and Vlassi, eds., *I Greci durante La venetocrazia*, p. 489.

¹¹⁴ Ernst Gerland, *Das Archiv des Herzogs von Kandia im Königl. Staatsarchiv zu Venedig* (Strasbourg, 1899), p. 98; Maltezou, "Byzantine 'consuetudines,'" pp. 271–72; Sally McKee, *Uncommon Dominion. Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia, 2000), p. 28; Arbel, "Η Κύπρος," p. 461.

¹¹⁵ David Malkiel, "The Ghetto Republic," in Robert C. Davis and Benjamin C. Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore/London, 2001), pp. 117–42.

¹¹⁶ Sander, *Urban Elites*, p. 76.

¹¹⁷ Zannini, "Problemi di contabilità pubblica," p. 77.

Venice to show liberality towards its new subjects, as happened in Santa Maura in 1684, where the Captain General of the Venetian fleet, Francesco Morosini, allowed the local inhabitants to propose the form of government most suitable to them. The document presented by the Republic's new subjects, which contained 16 chapters, was endorsed by Morosini and later confirmed by the Venetian Senate. Consequently it served as a basic constitutional document regulating Venice's relations with this colony.¹¹⁸ Similar procedures can be observed in the towns conquered by Venice in Morea, where, however, Venetian presence lasted hardly 30 years.¹¹⁹

The highest Republican councils, such as the Senate, the Council of Ten, or the Signory, could intervene in criminal cases and had the prerogative to transfer trials to them, a procedure known as *intromissione*. Magistrates who were accused of misgovernment by colonial inspectors (*sindici*) were brought to Venice for trial before the Senate or the Council of Forty (*Quarantia Criminal*).¹²⁰ Yet more frequently, Venice's central organs of government delegated their power to magistrates in the *stato da mar* (or the *terraferma*) and consequently, governors had extraordinary power to deal with the case concerned with an authority similar to that of the delegating council, including the very severe procedures of the Council of Ten (the *rito inquisitorio*).¹²¹ The Council of Ten could also delegate the authority to use the *rito inquisitorio* to an elected magistrate, who could use it at his discretion (in which case he normally also bore the title *Inquisitore*), or to a certain court, to be used only in handling a specific case.¹²² The Captain General of the Sea, who was often present in Venice's overseas colonies, seems to have had the inquisitorial authority by force of his election to this office.

¹¹⁸ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, p. 341; Anastasia Papadia-Lala, *Ο θεσμός των αστικών κοινοτήτων στον ελληνικό χώρο κατά την περίοδο της βενετοκρατίας (1305–1805 αι.)*. Μία συνθετική προσέγγιση (Venice, 2004), pp. 428–54.

¹¹⁹ Gaetano Cozzi, "La Repubblica di Venezia in Morea: un diritto per il nuovo Regno (1687–1715)," in *L'età dei lumi. Studi storici sul Settecento europeo in onore di Franco Venturi*, 2 vols (Naples, 1985), 2:749–50; Anastasia Papadia-Lala, *Ο θεσμός*, pp. 465–500.

¹²⁰ E.g., the case of Troilo Malipiero, Captain of Famagusta in 1502, Sanudo, *I diarii*, 4:456–57, 825.

¹²¹ Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto comune e veneto*, 9:280–84.

¹²² Claudio Povolo, "Aspetti e Problemi dell'amministrazione della giustizia penale nella Repubblica di Venezia, secoli XVI–XVII," in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato, società e giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (sec. XV–XVIII)* (Rome, 1980), pp. 162–67 (what is described in this article with regard to the *Terraferma* also applies to the *stato da mar*); Viggiano, *Lo specchio*, pp. 116–19.

Judicial appeal to higher magistracies in the colonies themselves, as well as to central judicial organs in Venice, was an important instrument of colonial rule. Besides providing Venice's subjects with indispensable access to equitable justice, it also served as a means of control over Venetian colonial magistrates and constituted a unifying framework to the colonial administration of an empire that was so diversified in many respects.

To avoid flooding Venetian courts with appeals from overseas territories, especially from the closer ones, appeals from minor localities were first directed to Venetian magistrates in major colonial centers, and only those of certain importance, as defined by law, could be forwarded to Venice (the official reason was to save local subject the trouble of making the long trip to the metropolis). For example, appeals from the sentences of the *podestà* of Antivari went to the *conte e capitano* of Scutari, and only those involving a penalty of at least 100 ducats were sent to Venice.¹²³ Similar arrangements were established for Nona, from which appeals had to go to Zara; from Poglizza, from which appeals had to pass to Spalato;¹²⁴ and for most of Istria's minor centers, wherefrom appeals went to the governor of Capodistria.¹²⁵

As far as appeals to Venice were concerned, the *auditori alle sentenze*, and later the *auditori nuovi*, were the magistrates who first handled all appeals in civil cases. They could deal with appeals regarding penalties that did not exceed a certain sum (20 gold ducats in 1407 and 100 ducats by 1668). In such cases, their endorsement of a former sentence was final. In more important cases they could only endorse former sentences on condition that they did so by unanimous vote of the three magistrates.¹²⁶ If they considered the appeal to be justified, the case was transferred to the appropriate court, normally the *Quarantia civil nova*.

Appeals regarding criminal sentences (as well as important civil cases) were dealt by the *Avvogadosi di comun*, who acted in such cases as controllers of proper judicial procedures. Once they were convinced that an appeal was justified, they issued an official note to the *Quarantia criminal*, or to the *Quarantia civil* (for a civil case), a copy of which was sent to the court that had passed the original sentence in order to suspend the

¹²³ Levi, "Venezia e il Montenegro," p. 47; Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," p. 68.

¹²⁴ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," p. 70.

¹²⁵ Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 59.

¹²⁶ Ceferino Caro Lopez, "Gli auditori nuovi e il dominio di Terraferma," in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato, società e giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (XV–XVIII sec.)* (Rome, 1980), pp. 259–316.

execution of the penalty. One of the *Avvogadori* also defended the case of the appellant before the higher court.¹²⁷

Although time consuming and costly, 15th-century sources attest, at least for Crete and Zara, that appeals to Venice from sentences passed in these colonies were quite numerous, and decisions of colonial governors were often overturned.¹²⁸ The pressure on the judicial system of appeals must have been difficult to handle when the overseas empire reached the zenith of demographic expansion in the mid-16th century. For those subjects of the maritime dominions who could not afford presenting an appeal in Venice, there remained the possibility of appealing to colonial inspectors (*sindici*) who toured the colonies periodically.

Following the establishment of the regional *provveditori generali*, they began to hear appeals from the various territories subject to their authority, but the archival documents do not always allow us to form a clear idea of the judicial authority of the *Provveditore Generale da Mar*.¹²⁹ In the case of the *Provveditore Generale in Dalmazia e Albania*, however, legislative sources indicate that from the early 17th century onward, this magistrate became the highest instance of appeal from territories in those regions,¹³⁰ thus allowing colonial subjects recourse to a regular senior magistracy that was also relatively accessible.

Adjudicating colonial subjects seems to have been one of, if not the main, occupations of civil administrators in Venice's overseas territories. The *bailo* of Corfu, his two counselors, the *Luogotenente* of Cyprus and the Duke of Crete and their respective counselors, the *rettori* of Crete's provincial towns, and all other magistrates whose key responsibility was to deal with the civil society, were first of all magistrates, that is, judges. Early modern European societies were very litigious, and this was also true for Venetian colonial societies. One could not be idle in this field. Edward Muir has considered what he calls "continuous litigation" a central

¹²⁷ Povolo, "Aspetti e problemi," pp. 200–201. In this case too, what is attributed in this article to appeals from the *Terraferma* also applies to appeals from the *stato da mar*.

¹²⁸ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 86–87, 91–93.

¹²⁹ Ivan Pederin, "Die Wichtigen Ämter der venezianischen Verwaltung in Dalmatien und der Einfluss venezianischer Organe auf die Zustände in Dalmatien," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 20 (1990), 338; Viggiano, *Lo specchio*, pp. 10–11.

¹³⁰ Paladini, *Un caos che spaventa*, p. 38. This magistrate became the final instance for appeals in Dalmatia and Albania in 1634; see Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," p. 190.

characteristic of the early modern Venetian *terraferma*.¹³¹ This characterization can easily be extended to Venice's overseas territories.

Venetian magistrates were not required to have legal training, and Venice's judicial traditions left much room for individual judgment.¹³² Nevertheless, the rectors had to take into consideration local statutes, feudal customs, and privileges of which they were often entirely ignorant. They were therefore greatly dependent on the collaboration of local experts and mediators. Problems of language and communication necessitated using interpreters. In small territories, where the Venetian *rettore* had to face these difficulties single-handedly, the challenge must have been even greater, especially since governors of small and distant territories tended to be young and inexperienced.¹³³ Yet being outsiders was also an advantage in solving disputes between local subjects. In fact, the judicial activity of the Venetian magistrates was fundamental to enhancing Venice's claim of providing impartial justice for all its subjects.¹³⁴

Angelo Ventura has depicted what he described as the crisis of the Venetian administration of justice in the 16th-century *terraferma*. The local nobilities acted as judges in courts of first instance, including the basic inquests of criminal cases, and when they were the accused, intimidated testimonies and influenced inquests and verdicts by using patronage and violence. The plebeians, who generally preferred Venetian judges, were often unable to reach them. Venice simply lacked means, and probably also motivation, to impose its authority and laws outside the boundaries of the lagoon city. Ventura notes that the crisis of the Venetian judicial administration was a symptom of broader problems in the Venetian state and that it was quite evident already in the 16th century, although later it became even worse.¹³⁵

Does this description, provided it is accurate, also apply to the overseas territories? One explanation suggested by Ventura for this situation was the Republic's lack of means to impose its laws and authority on a society ruled de facto by local potentates. The gloomy picture that arises from the few examples brought by Ventura from the *stato da mar* is confirmed by

¹³¹ Edward Muir, "Was There Republicanism in the Renaissance Republics? Venice after Agnadello," in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore/London, 2000), pp. 137–67.

¹³² Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," pp. 33, 38; O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 80.

¹³³ E.g., Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Korčula sous la domination de Venise au 15^e siècle. Pouvoir, économie et vie quotidienne dans une île dalmate au Moyen Âge tardif* (Paris, 2011), p. 2.

¹³⁴ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," pp. 31–78; O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 75–96.

¹³⁵ Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*, pp. 440–54.

other studies.¹³⁶ Apparently, only in exceptional situations were the Venetians ready to use drastic judicial measures, such as the *rito inquisitoriale*, normally accompanied by the intervention of a high-ranking *provveditore*, to put things in order. But in the wake of such interventions, the power structures and social networks of local societies dominated the scene once again. With the further weakening of the Venetian state machine in the 18th century, the situation could only have deteriorated, especially in areas that were at a certain distance from the primary administrative centers.

VI. Colonial Religions

Catholics and Orthodox: Hierarchies and Relationships

After the establishment of the Latin empire in the wake of the Fourth Crusade, Venice insisted that the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople would be a Venetian subject, and so also all other bishops of *Romania*, as the former Byzantine territories were commonly styled. Venice's efforts to secure the implementation of this principle continued in the following periods. In 1437, for example, the Senate decreed that in all territories subject to Venetian rule, holders of benefices should be Venetian citizens.¹³⁷ In 1488, demonstrating a disposition to allow its colonial subjects to have a small share in the ecclesiastical revenues, the Republic reserved to its own citizens benefices that brought a yearly income of 60 ducats or more, leaving minor benefices to local subjects.¹³⁸

Venice was constrained to abandon the custom of electing prelates in its Senate as a price for Pope Julius II's secession from the League of Cambrai in 1510. While formally ceding the election of bishops throughout the Venetian state to the Holy See, it succeeded in keeping the right to elect in its Senate two senior prelates: the Patriarch of Venice and the Archbishop of Candia.¹³⁹ Yet, in the following centuries too, Venice and its patricians

¹³⁶ E.g., Viggiano, *Lo specchio della Repubblica*, pp. 114–90; Nicolas Karapidakis, “Îles Ioniennes politiques (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle),” in Maltezou, Tzavara, and Vlassi, eds., *I Greci durante La venetocrazia*, pp. 448–53.

¹³⁷ Cozzi, “Politica, società, istituzioni,” p. 239.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 243.

¹³⁹ Federico Seneca, *Venezia e papa Giulio II* (Padua, 1962), p. 146; Gaetano Cozzi, “I rapporti tra stato e Chiesa,” in Giuseppe Gullino, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia tra riforma protestante e riforma cattolica* (Milan, 1990), pp. 19–20; Peter Laven, *Renaissance Italy, 1464–1534* (London, 1966), p. 204; Dan Ioan Mureșan, “Girolamo Lando, titolare du patriarcat

often succeeded, by diplomatic means combined with family strategies, to secure the election of Venetians patricians, citizens, and subjects to important benefices throughout the empire, including the *stato da mar*.¹⁴⁰

As a matter of fact, in the Republic's overseas dominions the foremost challenge in the religious and ecclesiastical sphere was not so much assuring the election of its own patricians and citizens but, rather, the religious affiliation of its subjects and the existence of rival ecclesiastical hierarchies in the *stato da mar*. The issue was all the more complicated, considering that in trying to keep its multi-religious empire together, Venice also had to cope with external interferences of various interested parties: the papal curia, several Catholic organizations, the Greek Orthodox patriarch, and later also Russia.¹⁴¹

Recent historiography tends to turn away from what is presented as a dichotomous vision of relations between Orthodox Greeks and Roman Catholics, especially in Crete. It has been argued that the strict separation that underlay the original colonial arrangements established by Venice in the early 13th century could not withstand the centuries-long development of a society in which the "Latins" constituted a small minority.¹⁴² This interpretation has received special emphasis in studies of early modern Crete, which has even been depicted as a harmonious society, in which "religious freedom and a measure of political tact, combined with a prolonged religious dispute with Rome, united all Cretans, both Orthodox and Catholic, on the side of Venice."¹⁴³

Yet it was not so easy to ignore the basic doctrinal differences between eastern and western Christianity, the institutional subjugation of the Greek Church to the Latin one, as well as external developments, such as the Catholic Reformation, and, in the 18th century, the Russian intervention in Mediterranean politics. All these brought cultural and religious antagonisms

de Constantinople (1464–1497), et son rôle dans la politique orientale du Saint Siège," *Annuario dell'Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica di Venezia* 8 (2006), 155–56.

¹⁴⁰ Paolo Prodi, "The Structure and Organization of the Church in Renaissance Venice: Suggestions for Research," in John R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), p. 418; Laven, *Renaissance Italy*, pp. 205–206; Gaetano Cozzi, "Venezia nello scenario europeo (1517–1599)," in Gaetano Cozzi, Michael Knapton, and Giovanni Scarabello, eds., *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna. Dal 1517 alla fine della Repubblica* (Turin, 1992), p. 21.

¹⁴¹ Benjamin Arbel, "Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox in the Early Modern Venetian State," in Nili Cohen and Andreas Heldrich, eds., *The Three Religions* (Munich, 2002), pp. 73–86.

¹⁴² McKee, *Uncommon Dominion*.

¹⁴³ Nikolaos M. Panagiotakes, *El Greco—the Cretan Years* (London, 2009), p. 7.

to the surface. An all-embracing cultural and religious harmony was impossible to achieve in the early modern *stato da mar* (or anywhere else).

For obvious political considerations, Venice chose to recognize the autonomy of the Orthodox believers and priests in exercising their basic rituals, such as baptism, communion, matrimony, and, in general, the Eastern liturgy.¹⁴⁴ Orthodox monasteries were also tolerated. Venice recognized the right of the Greek ecclesiastics to celebrate holidays and organize processions. Furthermore, Orthodox priests and monks were exempted from forced labor and military conscription. This policy was applied in every overseas territory in which there were communities, priests, and churches belonging to the various branches of Eastern Christianity.

The Republic strove to receive formal recognition from the popes of this peculiar situation, in which Eastern rites and liturgies and Eastern ecclesiastical hierarchies were functioning on a wide scale in territories ruled by a Catholic state. In doing so, Venice made use of the formal union of the Roman and Eastern Churches, declared in 1439 in the Council of Florence. This union is often presented as an episode that had no effect on relations between these two wings of Christianity, but in Venice's overseas empire it served as an ideological framework for the ecclesiastical order.¹⁴⁵

The status of the Orthodox Church in Venetian dominions generally resulted from the circumstances in which these territories had been integrated into the Venetian empire. In Crete, which was conquered by military force in a context of bitter conflict with the Byzantine empire, no Greek prelates were permitted, and the senior ecclesiastical hierarchy only included Roman prelates: an archbishop and nine suffragan bishops.¹⁴⁶ Zara, Spalato, and Antivari were also seats of Catholic archbishops, and there were around 14 Catholic bishoprics in the coastal towns of Dalmatia and Albania that were ruled by Venice. Yet there too, no Orthodox bishop was allowed to function or even reside. In other words, Venice's Orthodox subjects in Crete, Dalmatia, and Albania lacked strong religious leadership. For their ordination, their priests had to rely on prelates residing outside these territories.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Letterio Augliera, *Libri, politica, religione nel Levante del Seicento. La tipografia di Nicodemo Metaxas, primo editore di testi greci nell'Oriente ortodosso* (Venice, 1996), pp. 101–02.

¹⁴⁵ Zacharia N. Tsirpanlis, "Il decreto fiorentino di unione e la sua applicazione nell'arcipelago greco. Il caso di Creta e di Rodi," *Thesaurismata* 21 (1991), 43–88.

¹⁴⁶ Flaminio Corner, *Creta Sacra*, 2 vols (Venice, 1755), 1: lxx–lxxviii.

¹⁴⁷ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, p. 378; Nikolaos B. Tomadakis, "Οι ορθόδοξοι παπάδες επί ενετοκρατίας και η χειροτονία αυτών," *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 13 (1959), 39–72; Manoussos I.

The four Cretan towns of Candia, La Canea, Rettimo, and Sitia had their *protopapàdes*, or chief priests, each of whom had a deputy with the title of *protopsaltis* (chief cantor).¹⁴⁸ The chief priests were elected by the community of priests (except for about 130 Greek priests directly subjected to the Latin archbishop) under the surveillance of the *Reggimento*. The election of priests, as well as the license to leave the island for ordination, was subject to confirmation by the Venetian civil authorities.¹⁴⁹

By contrast, there were Greek bishops in Cyprus, Coron and Modon, in Malvasia (Monemvasia), on Cerigo (Kythira), and apparently also on Scarpanto (Karpathos).¹⁵⁰ This was simply the heritage of pre-Venetian arrangements. But the existence of such Orthodox bishops also served Venetian interests, since Greek priests had to be ordained somewhere, and Venice preferred such ordination to be performed in Venetian territories.¹⁵¹ The alternative would have been ordination by bishops who were subjects of foreign powers. In fact, since there were no Serbian-Orthodox bishops in the Venetian dominions, Serbian-Orthodox priests were subject to prelates who resided in Ottoman, Hungarian, and, later, Austrian territories.¹⁵²

When Corfu became a Venetian territory in 1386, there was only a Roman bishop (actually an archbishop) there, whereas the Greek Church

Manoussakas, "Η χειροτονία ιερέων της Κρήτης από το μητροπολίτη Κορίνθου (έγγραφο του 15' αιώνα)," *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 16 [Δ'/4] (1964–65), 317–30.

¹⁴⁸ Nikolaos B. Tomadakis, "La politica religiosa di Venezia a Creta verso i Cretesi ortodossi dal XIII al XV secolo," in Agostino Pertusi, ed., *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, 2 vols (Florence, 1973), vol. 1, part 2, p. 789.

¹⁴⁹ Freddy Thiriet, "La situation religieuse en Crète au début du XV^e siècle," *Byzantion* 36 (1966), 204–206; Thiriet, "Églises, fidèles et clergés en Crète vénitienne," in *Πεπραγμένα του Δ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου* (1976), vol. 2 (Athens, 1981), pp. 484–500.

¹⁵⁰ Gerassimos D. Pagratis, ed., *Εκκλησία και Κράτος στα βενετικά νησιά του Ιονίου Πελάγος. Μαρτυρίες για τη δράση Ιταλών Φραγκισκανών Μισσιοναρίων από τα αρχεία της Propaganda Fide (17^{ος} αιώνας)* (Athens, 2009), p. 63 (Cerigo). For the bishops of Coron, see Thiriet, *La Romanie*, pp. 129 n. 1, 289, 404–05 (claiming that only Coron preserved its Greek bishop); for Modon, see Tsirpanlis, "Il decreto fiorentino," p. 49; for Monemvasia, see Giorgio Fedalto, *Ricerche sulla posizione giuridica ed ecclesiastica dei Greci a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI* (Florence, 1967), p. 71 (1504). For the bishop of Scarpanto, see Chryssa Maltezou, "Gavriil Seviros imprigionato dai Veneziani per calunnia di rebelione," in Dimitris C. Apostolopoulos, ed., *Gavriil Seviros, arcivescovo si Filadelfia a Venezia e la sua epoca* (Venice, 2004), p. 108.

¹⁵¹ Tomadakis, "Οι Ορθόδοξοι παπάδες," pp. 39–72; Maria Chairiti, "Νέα στοιχεία περί της χειροτονίας Ορθόδοξων ιερών Κρήτης επί Βενετοκρατίας," in G. I. Kourmoules and M. I. Manoussakas, eds., *Πεπραγμένα του Τρίτου Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου (Ρέθυμνον, 1971)*, 3 vols (Athens, 1973–75), 3:333–41; Manoussakas, "Η Χειροτονία ιερέων," pp. 317–30; Tsirpanlis, "Il decreto fiorentino," 48.

¹⁵² Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, p. 569; Elizabeth Roberts, *The Realm of the Black Mountain: A History of Montenegro* (London, 2007), p. 116; John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine and Spiritual Culture* (Alden, Mass./Oxford, 2011), p. 65.

was guided by a college of 32 priests, headed by a “great chief priest” (μέγας πρωτοπαπάς) who was elected for five years by the assembled clergy and nobles. He was subject, in spiritual matters, to the Oecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.¹⁵³ Each one of the four provinces of the island, as well as the island of Paxo, had its own chief priest (*protopapàs*), but all *protopapàdes* were subject to Corfu’s great chief priest.

Like in the other territories just mentioned, the population of Cyprus was overwhelmingly Greek Orthodox, but since the late 12th century the island had been ruled by the Lusignan dynasty, and its society was largely dominated by a Frankish (Catholic) aristocracy. From 1260 the local church was headed by a Latin archbishop, who was the sole metropolitan on the island, and by three Latin bishops. However, there were also four Greek Orthodox bishops, who were subordinate to the respective Latin prelates. Venice simply adopted this pre-existing arrangement.¹⁵⁴

Likewise, following the occupation of Zante 1482 and of Cephalonia and Ithaca in 1500, the Republic was forced to recognize, in addition to the Roman bishop, the existence of a Greek bishop (later archbishop) of Cephalonia Zante, Ithaca, and the Strophades. The Greek bishop had been instituted in 1454 by the former lord of these islands, Leonardo Tocco, and was dependent on the metropolitan Archbishop of Corinth.¹⁵⁵

Far-away Tinos was (and still is) exceptional in the religious composition of its inhabitants. More than half of Venice’s Tiniot subjects were Roman Catholic. The island’s capital, the so-called Borgo, which was the biggest town in the early modern Cyclades, had a mixed population of Catholics and Orthodox, and so did a few villages. Thus, the distinction between the two rites did not correspond to any division between the urban and the rural society, as it did in Dalmatia. Most villages had either an exclusively Catholic or an exclusively Orthodox population, but all Greek churches also had an altar for the Latin rite. A *protopapàs*, subject

¹⁵³ On the College of 32 priests, see Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, p. 56 (1406). According to Thiriet, there were other 33 priests, who functioned in the countryside; Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne*, p. 403; on the Chief Priest, see Pagratis, ed., *Εκκλησία και Κράτος*, p. 62; Miller, “The Ionian Islands,” pp. 218–19.

¹⁵⁴ Hill, *History of Cyprus*, 3:1059–60; Theodoros Papadopoulos, “Η Εκκλησία Κύπρου κατά την περίοδο της φραγκοκρατίας,” in Theodore Papadopoulos, ed., *Ιστορία της Κύπρου* vol. 4/A (Nicosia, 1995), pp. 543–665; Chris Schabel, “Religion,” in Angel Nicolaou-Konnari and Chris Schabel, eds., *Cyprus. Society and Culture, 1191–1374* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 157–218; Benjamin Arbel, “L’elezione dei prelati greci a Cipro durante la dominazione veneziana,” in Maltezou, Tzavara, and Vlassi, eds., *I Greci durante La venetocrazia*, pp. 373–80.

¹⁵⁵ Pagratis, ed., *Εκκλησία και Κράτος*, pp. 61–62. The Latin bishop of Cephalonia and Zante had his see in Zante, whereas the Orthodox one was located on Cephalonia.

in administrative matters to the local Catholic bishop, headed the island's Orthodox community.¹⁵⁶

Venice used civic and religious rituals to emphasize the union of the two Churches in its territories. Processions, masses in both Latin and Orthodox churches, the use of Greek and Latin in the same ceremonies, and the common celebration of both Western and Eastern feasts, reflect this policy, although it was not always easy to persuade the Orthodox clergy to take part in religious rites that expressed, in their eyes, heretical beliefs.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the participation of Catholics and Orthodox subjects in common religious processions could also be a cause of trouble.

Many Catholic bishops did not bother to reside in their dioceses and considered them, rather, a source of income. In such cases, which were common even in the post-Tridentine era, Venice was unable to rely on their presence and influence in these territories, and their absence also enabled the Orthodox Church to gain territory among the local inhabitants.¹⁵⁸ Orthodox bishops, and all the more so priests, were in much stronger contact with the local population. They shared a common language, common experiences, a common hatred of the Roman Church, and partially, at least, also a dislike of the foreign rulers. Consequently, the Greek Church, though formally in a subordinate position, proved to be much more successful in attracting local inhabitants to its rites, services, and even religious convictions. This was particularly the case in Crete, where the relatively few Latins had been increasingly hellenized, including in the religious sphere, in the course of the long Venetian domination.¹⁵⁹ Yet the situation was not always clear-cut, since the head priests were often Uniats—those Greeks who, while preserving the Orthodox rites and codes of canon law, were in communion with the Roman Catholic

¹⁵⁶ Slot, *Archipelagus*, 1:29, 58, 61.

¹⁵⁷ E.g., Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 380–85; Alfredo Viggiano, "Venezia e la chiesa greca. Forme di potere e modi del conflitto nelle isole del Levante," in Massimo Costantini, ed., *Il Mediterraneo centro-orientale tra vecchie e nuove egemonie* (Rome, 1998), p. 26; Aspasia Papadaki, *Cerimonie religiose e laiche nell'isola di Creta durante il dominio veneziano* (Spoleto, 2005).

¹⁵⁸ Spanakis, "Η Θρησκευτικό-Εκκλησιαστική κατάσταση"; Eva Tea, "Saggio sulla storia religiosa di Candia dal 1590 al 1630," *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 72.2 (1912–13), 1364; Georg Hofmann, "Wie stand es mit der Kircheneinheit auf Kreta im XV. Jahrhundert?" *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 10 (1944), 100–104; Augliera, *Libri, politica, religione*, pp. 106–08.

¹⁵⁹ Thiriet, "Eglises, fidèles et clergés," p. 499.

Church—and therefore not very popular among local believers, and corruption was not limited to the Catholic camp.¹⁶⁰

Venice, the stato da mar and the Renaissance Church

On several occasions during the 15th century, Venice still appears to have backed Roman efforts of proselytism carried out in its territories, and it also acted itself against what must have seemed to its leaders as unorthodox patterns of religious life. For example, it allowed the bishop of Cattaro to carry out a campaign aimed at converting Orthodox villagers to Catholicism; and after taking possession of Veglia, where Catholic religious services had been conducted in Church Slavonic, Venice chased out the Slavic monks and declared Latin to be the only legitimate language for religious services on the island.¹⁶¹ The Republic also favored the Uniats.¹⁶² From the 16th century onward, however, the *Dominante* appears to have been more liberal, and certainly more cautious, in handling religious affairs in its overseas territories.

Between the mid-15th and the mid-16th centuries, the papacy's attitude towards the Greek Orthodox world was rather lenient, under the influence of the Italian Renaissance and the role of Greek scholars in Renaissance humanism and also in view of papal policy of appeasement with the Greek Orthodox world against the backdrop of Ottoman advance. This trend was particularly manifest in the papacy's policy regarding the Greek community in Venice and its overseas territories. In two papal bulls, issued in 1514, Pope Leo X, in reply to an official request by Venice, allowed the Greeks in Venice to build a church in which the Greek liturgy would be celebrated and to have a separate cemetery. The Greeks were placed under the pope's direct supervision, overriding the authority of the local Roman clergy, including that of the Venetian patriarch.¹⁶³ In 1521, the same pope ruled that the Greeks could not be brought to trial before Roman bishops and that Greek monks and priests in the Venetian islands of Zante and Cephalonia were only subject to their own bishop and were entitled to all the prerogatives and immunities enjoyed by their Latin homologues.

¹⁶⁰ Theodorakis Detorakis, *History of Crete* (Heraklion, 1994), p. 177.

¹⁶¹ Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, pp. 591–92, 603.

¹⁶² Arbel, "Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox," pp. 78–79.

¹⁶³ Fedalto, *Ricerche*, pp. 44–53; Manoussos I. Manoussacas, "The History of the Greek Confraternity (1498–1982) and the Activity of the Greek Institute of Venice (1966–1982)," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 5 (1989), pp. 324–26; Arbel, "Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox," p. 80.

At the request of the Greeks in Venice, Pope Clement VII created in 1526 a commission of Catholic prelates who were ordered to ensure that Greeks would be able to enjoy the privileges granted by Leo X without hindrance. In 1540 Pope Paul III intervened to guarantee that these privileges, conceded to the Greek Orthodox in Venetian Corfu, were actually respected, and he reiterated the direct subordination of the Greeks of Venice to papal jurisdiction.¹⁶⁴ Such repeated initiatives by three Renaissance popes may reflect difficulties in carrying out this policy, but they express all the same an exceptionally liberal attitude. This policy was soon to be radically reversed, creating new challenges to relations between Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics in Venice and its maritime provinces.

The Challenge of the Catholic Reformation

The danger inherent in the new spirit of the Counter Reformation was already perceived by the Venetian government during the sessions of the Council of Trent (1545–63), which reformulated the Catholic dogma. Venetian representatives in Trent were active in trying to prevent any formulation of Catholic doctrine that could hamper the Republic's relations with its non-Catholic subjects.¹⁶⁵

Coping with the Counter-Reformation papacy was a more complicated matter. Paul III, who in 1540 still confirmed the liberal policy of his predecessors with respect to the Greek Orthodox believers, revoked in 1542 the privileges that had been granted to the Greek community in Venice and required that all Orthodox priests should make a profession of (Catholic) faith.¹⁶⁶ In 1564, his successor, Pius IV, in his bull *Romanus Pontifex*, abolished all exemptions from dependency to Roman bishops and even seriously considered suppressing all Orthodox worship on Italian soil. In the same year he issued a bull requiring university students to make a profession of faith as a condition of receiving their *laurea*.¹⁶⁷ The following pope, Pius V, prohibited in August 1566 the performance of Greek and Roman rites by priests who did not belong to the respective Churches. In 1568, the

¹⁶⁴ Augliera, *Libri, politica, religione*, pp. 101–02.

¹⁶⁵ Fedalto, *Ricerche*, p. 83.

¹⁶⁶ Augliera, *Libri, Politica Religione*, p. 102 n.

¹⁶⁷ Vittorio Peri, "L'incredibile risguardo e l'incredibile destrezza. La resistenza di Venezia alle iniziative postridentine della Santa Sede per i Greci dei suoi domini," in Hans Georg Beck, Manoussos Manoussakas, and Agostino Pertusi, eds., *Venezia centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente, secoli XV–XVI. Aspetti e problemi*, 2 vols (Florence, 1977), 2:600; Fedalto, *Ricerche*, pp. 88–89.

same pope even ruled in his bull *In coena Domini* that no Catholic prince should allow people other than Catholics to enter into his territories. In 1573, Pope Gregory XIII founded a committee or congregation of cardinals, *Congregazione per la riforma dei Greci viventi in Italia*, empowered to “reform” all Greeks and Albanians living in Italy.¹⁶⁸

Though founded mainly to combat the threat of Protestant heresy, the Papal Inquisition quickly developed into a mechanism that prosecuted any form of belief or behavior that was considered to be a menace to good Christian society. Before the Catholic Reformation, the Orthodox Church had generally been conceived by the Catholic Church as schismatic, whereas Catholics tended to be considered by the Orthodox authorities as heretics. The Catholic Reformation brought about a certain leveling of this unbalanced relationship, since Orthodox Christians were often described in Catholic documents of this period as heretics. Although Inquisition trials against Orthodox Christians were relatively few, their very existence, including in Venice’s Hellenic territories, is indicative of an ambition to purify lands ruled by Catholics from any other form of Christian practice and belief.¹⁶⁹

This intolerant spirit ended up creating tensions also in Venetian overseas territories. Some of the Catholic prelates, led by the post-Tridentine spirit of militant Catholicism, were resolute to reside in their sees in order to oversee the implementation of the Church’s new policies. Thus in the early 1560s, Filippo Mocenigo, Archbishop of Nicosia, who had also participated in the last session of the Council of Trent, tried to implement its decisions in Cyprus. His initiatives resulted in destabilizing the delicate relationship between the dominant Catholic power and the predominantly Greek Orthodox Cypriots.¹⁷⁰ The 21 years in which Lorenzo Vitturi, a descendant of a Venetian patrician family, served as Archbishop of Crete (1576–97) were characterized by recurrent conflicts between this prelate and the *Reggimento*.¹⁷¹ The behavior of the Roman bishop of Tinos, Giorgio Perpignani, also ignited resentment among Greek Orthodox believers and caused preoccupation in Venice.¹⁷² The Republic considered such intransigent conduct a threat to political stability. It instructed its

¹⁶⁸ Peri, “L’incredibile risguardo,” pp. 600–01, 604.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 599–602.

¹⁷⁰ J. Hackett, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus* (London, 1901; repr. 1972), pp. 174–75; Arbel, “Η Κύπρος,” p. 527.

¹⁷¹ Fedalto, *Ricerche*, p. 90; Tea, “Saggio sulla storia religiosa,” pp. 1380–85.

¹⁷² Tea, “Saggio sulla storia religiosa,” pp. 1409–11.

governors to curb the actions of the zealot prelates and ordered its ambassador in the Roman curia to try and convince the pope of the futility of a militant policy in the Republic's overseas dominions.¹⁷³ It also prevented the settlement of Dominicans and Jesuits in the Ionian Islands and only tolerated that of the Franciscans on Corfu.¹⁷⁴ The Jesuits, who arrived in Crete in the later 16th century, were expelled during the crisis of the Interdict in 1606.¹⁷⁵ Their return in the 1620s as agents of the Propaganda Fide intensified the religious tensions on the island, to Venice's great disapproval. The well-known opposition of Venice to papal interventions in its internal affairs was arguably expressed overseas even more vehemently than in Italy, probably because those Roman prelates who chose to reside in their dioceses located in Venice's colonies were imbued with a missionary zeal.

It is against the backdrop of such incidents in the *stato da mar*, including the reversal of a decision to establish a Greek Orthodox hierarchy of prelates in Crete, that we should understand Venice's decision, taken in 1578, to allow a Greek Orthodox archbishop to reside in Venice, with the title of Archbishop of Philadelphia.¹⁷⁶ The rulers of Venice must have understood that some sort of demonstrative gesture was needed to prevent a worsening of the *Dominante's* relationship with its Greek Orthodox subjects.

In the 1580s and 1590s, the attitude towards Venice's Greek Orthodox subjects continued to be disputed between Venice and Rome, and it played a role in the process that finally led to the crisis of the papal Interdict in 1606–07 (whose immediate reasons concerned other issues). In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII's reform of the calendar became a new source of potential trouble, since the papacy considered the adoption of the new calendar as a trial for recognition of its supremacy in religious affairs, whereas the Orthodox world regarded it from an opposite perspective, as a trial for non-recognition of papal supremacy. Venetian diplomacy, however, was

¹⁷³ Tea, "Saggio sulla storia religiosa," pp. 1384–85, 1388; Fedalto, *Ricerche*, pp. 94, 108; Lamansky, *Secrets d'État*, 2:072–073.

¹⁷⁴ Alberto Tenenti, "Le Isole Ionie: un area di frontiera," in Massimo Costantini, ed., *Il Mediterraneo centro-orientale tra vecchie e nuove egemonie* (Rome, 1998), pp. 14–15.

¹⁷⁵ Tea, "Saggio sulla storia religiosa," pp. 1389–91.

¹⁷⁶ Already in 1557, Venice's Greek community had nominated Pachomios, bishop of Zante and Cephalonia, to act in their church as bishop, which he apparently did for one year only. In 1577 they elected Gabriel Seviros to this see; Manoussos Manussacas [*sic*], "La comunità greca di Venezia e gli arcivescovi di Filadelfia," in *La Chiesa greca in Italia dall'VIII al XVI secolo*, 3 vols (Padua, 1972–73), 1:57.

successful in obtaining in 1588 the consent of Pope Sixtus V to abstain from applying the new Gregorian calendar in Venice's Greek colonies, in order to avoid strife. The relevant document only mentions Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia, but other sources indicate that a similar arrangement was implemented on Crete as well. Yet under the same pope, attempts were also made to subject Greek liturgical books to censorship.¹⁷⁷

The following pope, Clement VIII, in 1596 sent elaborate directions to all Catholic prelates with instructions on how to handle Greek Orthodox Christians living in their dioceses. These instructions were meant to suppress in Catholic countries all traces of an episcopal jurisdiction that would not depend on papal authority, according to the papal interpretation of the decrees of the Council of Trent. Venice admonished the governors of its overseas territories not to allow the bishops to implement these instructions.¹⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, when in 1593 that pope demanded that Maximos Margounios, the Greek bishop of Cerigo, be extradited to Rome for an examination on the charge of printing a theological text in Germany, Venice refused to do so.¹⁷⁹

The Greek Orthodox Challenge

Both before 1453 and after the fall of Byzantium, the intervention of the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople in matters related to Venice's Orthodox subjects had political repercussions, even when he was acting purely as an ecclesiastical leader. It is in this light that we have to understand Venice's recognition, in 1578, of the independence of Corfu's great *protopapàs* from both the Roman Catholic authorities and the Greek patriarchate, a decision that was apparently linked to the concurrent establishment of a Greek Orthodox archbishopric in Venice. The Republic insisted that all the correspondence of the Corfiot Great *Protopapàs* with the patriarch should pass through the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople and that the permission of the Venetian authorities in Corfu would be required for any act of excommunication or for monitories issued by the Great *Protopapàs* or by the patriarch. It also declared that any sentence on matrimony, ordination of priests, and the like would not be put into effect unless first submitted to and confirmed by the Venetian governors.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Fedalto, *Ricerche*, p. 103; Peri, "L'incredibile risguardo," pp. 615–17, 621; for Crete, see Corner, *Creta sacra*, 2:30; Panagiotakes, *El Greco*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁸ Peri, "L'incredibile risguardo," pp. 619–20.

¹⁷⁹ Fedalto, *Ricerche*, p. 109.

¹⁸⁰ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, p. 377.

The establishment of a Greek Archbishop of Philadelphia in Venice in 1578 was also aimed at severing the direct dependence of Greek Orthodox prelates in Venice's overseas territories on the Patriarch of Constantinople and at preventing them from turning to Orthodox prelates in Ottoman territories for their consecration. The Archbishop of Philadelphia thus became, at least in principle, the highest authority of Greek Orthodox Church in all the Venetian dominions, although his control over the Orthodox clergy in the *stato da mar* could not be very effective. In 1644, Venice even obtained the patriarch's formal recognition of this authority of the Archbishop of Philadelphia (as his legate), and in another bull, issued seven years later, the patriarch confirmed the consecration of the bishop of Cerigo by the Archbishop of Cephalonia, as a delegate of the Archbishop of Philadelphia, an act that can be seen as both recognition of a *fait-accompl*i and an expression of his own superior authority.¹⁸¹

Venice also preferred that the Archbishop of Philadelphia be consecrated in the Ionian Islands (i.e., on Venetian territory) by three Orthodox archbishops and not in Constantinople by the patriarch, although this procedure also had to receive the patriarch's permission. Another stratagem to avoid the consecration by the patriarch was the election of a former patriarch as Archbishop of Philadelphia, as in the case of Methodios Moronis, elected in December 1677, or the election of senior prelates such as Athanasios Valerianos, bishop of Cerigo, as Archbishop of Philadelphia in 1635, and of Sofronios Koutouvalis, Archbishop of Zante and Cephalonia, to the Philadelphia see in 1780; their nomination was considered as a transfer from one seat to another, without need of another consecration.¹⁸²

However, the Patriarch of Constantinople continued to be "an invisible local power" in Crete, and most probably also in other Greek Orthodox territories of the *stato da mar*. According to the report of a 17th-century Venetian governor of La Canea, the patriarch's agents arrived every year clandestinely to collect revenues; they carried with them blank forms of diplomas, benedictions, and excommunications, which they offered for sale, and they left the island "enriched by alms and spoils."¹⁸³ Apparently Venice was unable to stop this activity.

An even more difficult situation awaited Venice in the Morea, conquered by the Republic in the 1680s. Here, under the previous Ottoman rule, the

¹⁸¹ Manussacas [*sic*], "La comunità greca di Venezia," pp. 55, 57–87.

¹⁸² Ibid., pp. 58–62, 67.

¹⁸³ Tea, "Saggio sulla storia religiosa," pp. 1368–69.

Oecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople had great power over the local ecclesiastical institutions and, through them, over the entire Greek Orthodox population. The patriarch enjoyed half of the bishops' revenues, and the nomination of prelates and abbots was also in his hands. His bulls were highly respected, and the sanction of excommunication, which was his main weapon, deterred believers from disobeying his commands.¹⁸⁴

It was too risky to make any radical changes in the institutional structure of the Orthodox Church in the Morea. Yet Venice could not tolerate these expressions of foreign influence in its newly acquired territory, considering the dependence of the patriarch on the Ottoman sultan. Venice did not hesitate to introduce a Latin hierarchy, with four bishoprics and an archbishopric see at Corinth. Priests and monks followed suit. However, the Senate did not go so far as appropriating the election of Greek bishops itself, but it authorized the newly established town councils to do so. Unlike the situation in other overseas territories, the relative status of the Latin and Greek hierarchies seems to have been left without a clear definition. To prevent the flow of money from the Morea to the patriarch in Constantinople, the Senate abolished the bishops' extraordinary revenues, whereas the regular ones, derived from the *papàdes* and monasteries, were reduced to the sum that had previously remained in the bishops' hands.¹⁸⁵ These measures were not entirely successful. The patriarch's influence over the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the Morea persisted, money continued to flow to Constantinople, and the election of prelates, though exercised by the communal councils, was accompanied (as before) by simony. Greater success was achieved in blocking the execution of the patriarch's bulls, for these were treated in the same way as the papal bulls that were subject to the Republic's *exequatur*.¹⁸⁶

Except for one moment, in the early 1570s, when Venice seriously considered, after the loss of Cyprus, the re-establishment of Greek Orthodox bishoprics on Crete, the Republic always strove to prevent such an eventuality. In 1586–87, both Gabriel Seviros, Archbishop of Philadelphia in Venice, and Maximos Margounios, bishop of Cerigo, were in Crete, formally for private affairs but quite evidently also in an attempt to revive Orthodox episcopal presence on the island. Venice made every possible effort to prevent the two prelates from remaining there, and later did not

¹⁸⁴ Leopold von Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," in his *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 42: *Zur venezianischen Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1878), p. 342.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 340–42; Cozzi, "La Repubblica di Venezia in Morea," p. 786.

¹⁸⁶ Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," pp. 342–45.

hesitate to arrest Seviros on the charge of preparing a revolt in the colony intended to allow an Ottoman occupation of the island. It also forbade Margounios to return to his own diocese in Cerigo, on the basis of reports on his predecessor's behavior,¹⁸⁷ but probably also because of Cerigo's vicinity to Crete. When information about the presence in Crete of the Orthodox bishop of Chios reached Venice, orders were issued in 1588 to expel him without delay.¹⁸⁸ As Alberto Tenenti has emphasized, the main characteristic of Venice's religious policy in her overseas empire was a consistent effort to curb the autonomy of *both* the Catholic and the Orthodox Church, so as to reserve for itself decisions in the sphere as well.¹⁸⁹

However, the reality was sometimes much different from the legal norms that Venice was trying to impose on its dominions. Archbishop Seviros noted in a document presented to the Venetian authorities early in 1588, that the bishop of Scarpanto ordained about 100 Cretans to the priesthood within a short time on Cretan soil.¹⁹⁰ Andrea Bragadin, an outgoing Venetian *bailo* of Corfu, observed in 1621 that Greek priests let themselves be ordained in Ottoman territories, transgressing Venetian laws in this respect. Toward the end of the 18th century, an Orthodox bishop from Negroponte was able to act freely on Corfu, ordaining priests and conducting a campaign to convert local subject to the Greek rite.¹⁹¹ One is tempted to believe that such disorder resulted from the general weakening of the Venetian state system, what is often described as Venice's "decadence." But there is no way of ascertaining that this is really the case.

The Interdict and Its Colonial Aftermath

In 1605, the continuous disagreements between Venice and the papacy ended up by creating the major crisis known as the Interdict. Without entering into the details of this affair, suffice it to say that although the immediate reasons for the crisis concerned the State's handling of ecclesiastical property and its insistence on bringing criminal churchmen to trial before state courts, the

¹⁸⁷ Fedalto, *Ricerche*, pp. 100–101. He remained in Venice as a public teacher of Latin and Greek.

¹⁸⁸ Tea, "Saggio sulla storia religiosa," pp. 1372–73; Peri, "L'incredibile risguardo," p. 610; Kostas T. Tsiknakis, "Gabriele Seviros a Creta negli anni 1586–1587," in Dimitris G. Apostolopoulos, ed., *Gavrill Seviros, Arcivescovo di Filadelfia a Venezia e la sua epoca* (Venice, 2004), pp. 93–94; Maltezou, "Gavrill Seviros imprigionato." Archbishop Seviros spent five months in jail.

¹⁸⁹ Tenenti, "Le Isole Ionie," p. 14.

¹⁹⁰ Maltezou, "Gavrill Seviros imprigionato," p. 108.

¹⁹¹ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 391–92.

position of Greek Orthodox believers in Venetian territories and the care taken by Venice not to provoke them was not unrelated to this crisis. Paolo Sarpi, Venice's major spokesman during the Interdict conflict, referred to this issue in a document written in 1613, in which he emphasized the legitimacy of Venice's policy towards its Greek subjects, based on both Venetian legislation and former papal decisions.¹⁹²

During the Interdict crisis and in the following years there were even manifestations of solidarity with Venice on the part of the *Dominante's* Greek Orthodox subjects. Yet the *stato da mar* in the period that followed the Interdict crisis was not free of religious strife, caused by activities of Catholic prelates and missionaries and by preachers of both rites.¹⁹³ The interplay between zealous Catholic agents and the pragmatic and preoccupied Republic continued as before the Interdict crisis. The founding of the missionary organization of Propaganda Fide in 1622 added another element of friction between Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox in colonies such as the Ionian Islands and Crete, where the Franciscan friars connected to this organization were trying to gain souls for the Catholic cause with the support of Spanish agents.¹⁹⁴ Violent incidents originating in religious disagreement occurred in Crete during the following years, and constant vigilance was necessary in all overseas colonies to prevent new clashes between Orthodox and Catholics, not merely those resulting from outside intervention but also those resulting from the very friction of the two rites and their respective adherents.¹⁹⁵

When deemed necessary, the Republic did not hesitate to remove prelates from their dioceses. This was all the more evident, and probably also easier to carry out, in wartime. At the beginning of the war that ended with the Venetian conquest of the Morea, the Venetian commander, Francesco Morosini, having conquered Santa Maura and Prevesa in August and September 1684, wintered on Corfu. On that island during that moment, Archbishop Barbarigo was conducting an aggressive anti-Orthodox campaign. The archbishop was requested to return to Venice; and a dispute with the papacy on this regard did not change the mind of the Venetian Senate.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Peri, "L'Incredibile risguardo," pp. 605–06.

¹⁹³ For the role of Greek monks in inciting the Greek clergy against any collaboration with the Catholic prelates in the Ionian Islands, see Viggiano, *Lo specchio*, pp. 215–16.

¹⁹⁴ Tenenti, "Le Isole Ionie," p. 14; Pagratis, ed., *Εκκλησία και Κράτος*.

¹⁹⁵ Tea, "Saggio sulla storia religiosa," pp. 1421–25.

¹⁹⁶ Manfroni, *I colonizzatori italiani*, 2:278.

The last decades of Venetian rule in Crete have been depicted as a period of reconciliation and harmony between Catholics and Orthodox, and even these religious identities are often presented as secondary to a growing consciousness of a common Cretan identity at the backdrop of a tolerant Republican regime that defended the islanders from the militant Catholic Church.¹⁹⁷ This representation may apply to certain groups of the urban upper classes, where mixed marriages can often be encountered, and more particularly to certain literary circles that were strongly influenced by Italian Renaissance culture.¹⁹⁸ Not surprisingly, historians who emphasize these social and cultural trends tend to disregard the continuous religious frictions that have been described above. Apparently, these two contrasting phenomena co-existed in late Venetian Crete.

For the Greek Orthodox subjects, The Republic often fulfilled the role of an honest arbitrator, whose judgment was accepted by all parties concerned. Understandably, this image was nurtured by Venice and was arguably one of the strongest elements in keeping its overseas empire together. This role can be observed, for example, in the conflicts that developed between the elites of Zante and those of Cephalonia over the election of their Orthodox bishops (from the 17th century, archbishops) of Cephalonia and Zante. Since the electing body consisted of the clergy of Cephalonia, the elected prelate was in most cases also a Cephalonian. Finally it was the Venetian Senate that decided upon a procedure that would allow the election of a candidate from Zante every third time when a new bishop had to be elected.¹⁹⁹ The delicate question of mixed marriages between Catholics and Orthodox was also regulated by the state.²⁰⁰ In his study of the Ionian Islands in the 18th century, Alfredo Viggiano has observed the common interests of Venice and her Greek Orthodox subjects to consider the latter as directly subject to the civil authority, a dependence that they preferred over the coercive authority of the Latin prelates.²⁰¹

The Appearance of the Russians

In 1687, during the war of Morea, Orthodox bishops in the Balkans appealed to Russia for help against the allied Catholic powers of Venice

¹⁹⁷ Panagiotakes, *El Greco*, pp. 7, 71–74.

¹⁹⁸ David Holton, ed., *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete* (Cambridge, 1991).

¹⁹⁹ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 407–08.

²⁰⁰ Augliera, *Libri, Politica, religione*, p. 105; Viggiano, "Venezia e la chiesa greca," p. 27.

²⁰¹ Viggiano, *Lo specchio*, p. 200.

and Austria.²⁰² Tsar Peter the Great, however, perceived the potential of collaboration with the Slavs in the Balkans against the common Ottoman enemy. In the famous manifesto addressed to the Slavs in 1711, the tsar called upon them to join him in the holy struggle against the infidels. Religious terminology was prominent in his appeal. The manifesto was brought in 1712 to Montenegro by two special envoys, who also carried an appeal addressed to the inhabitants of the independent principality of Montenegro (Crna Gora) and to its ruler, the bishop-prince (*vladika*) Daniel (Danilo). The latter document, also phrased in a mixture of religious and ethnic terms (such as “the noble Slavic blood”), contained promises of privileges, exemptions, and liberties that the Montenegrins would enjoy in return for their alliance with Russia.²⁰³ This was the beginning of a long Russo-Montenegrin alliance, which was always expressed by Russia in religious symbols and terminology²⁰⁴ and ultimately had serious repercussions on the Venetian-ruled territories in the western Balkans and the Ionian Sea.

In 1767, a certain “Stephen the Small” (in Serbian: Šćepan Mali), a charismatic figure who had been active as a healer in Venetian-held Budua, succeeded in convincing the Montenegrins that he was none other than the Russian tsar, Peter III (who, in fact, had been assassinated in jail after his deposition). Consequently he was accepted as the principality’s new ruler, instead of its *vladika*, Sava. He even succeeded in getting the recognition of the Serbian Patriarch of Ipek, who, at that moment, was a refugee in Montenegro. Before long, the enthusiasm aroused by the impostor crossed the border to the Venetian provinces of Montenegro and to Ottoman Albania, causing great preoccupation both in Venice and in Istanbul.²⁰⁵

These developments ignited a virtual revolt in Venetian Albania (actually Montenegro), to which Venice responded by force of arms. An offensive against Montenegro itself apparently failed,²⁰⁶ but within the Venetian territories, Serbian Orthodox monasteries were occupied by military units, and military measures were also taken against several villages located in the southern part of the province. However, it did not take long

²⁰² Heinrich Kretschmyr, *Geschichte von Venedig*, 3 vols in 2 (Gotha, 1905–34; repr. Aalen, 1964), 3:349.

²⁰³ Paul Coquelle, *Histoire du Monténégro et de la Bosnie depuis les origines* (Paris, 1895), pp. 201–03, 215, 218.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 209–10; Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 140.

²⁰⁵ Coquelle, *Histoire du Monténégro*, pp. 223–28.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 227–28.

before Stephen the Small decided to join a monastery himself; and he was assassinated by an Ottoman agent shortly thereafter.²⁰⁷

In 1768 a new war began between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, and despite Venice's neutrality, the Russian presence in the area was conceived by the Republic as an even greater threat than that of the false tsar. The awakening of a proto-national consciousness among Slavs and Greeks, encouraged by Orthodox Russia, was not limited to the land ruled by the Ottomans, and Russian agents were apparently also active in Venetian territories.²⁰⁸ In the following years investigations were carried out and trials were held in Venetian Albania against local and foreign agents, who were said to instigate Venetian subjects to emigrate to other countries or to collaborate with foreign powers. These years were also marked by strong rivalries among local villages and families who supported either Venice or the pan-Slavic and pan-Orthodox solidarity.²⁰⁹

The appearance of the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean in 1770 had a dramatic impact on the Orthodox population in the Balkans and the Ionian Islands. The main arena of the Russian campaign was in the Aegean, but some Russian warships were also active in the Ionian Sea. As already mentioned, Venice declared its neutrality in the Russo-Ottoman war, yet many of its colonial subjects felt solidarity with their Orthodox brethren in Ottoman territories, and some of them were ready to be actively involved in their struggle for liberty. In 1769 Russian agents had already recruited in Livorno some Slavic deserters from the Venetian Navy.²¹⁰ The Cephalonian brothers Spyridon and Ioannis Metaxàs organized a company of about 100 men to assist the Russian army at Patras.²¹¹ Such phenomena not only constituted a defiance of Venetian authority but also risked jeopardizing Venice's delicate relationship with the Ottoman Empire. Venice followed with great preoccupation what Larry Wolff has described, referring to the Republic's Slavic subjects, as the latter's "slippery slope of uncertain identity and allegiance,"²¹² a description that can also be attributed, at least in part, to Venice's Greek Orthodox subjects in the Ionian Islands. Russia then nominated Greeks and Albanians as consuls in Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia, and Cephalonian merchantmen began flying the Russian flag.

²⁰⁷ Paladini, *'Un caos che spaventa'*, pp. 183–84.

²⁰⁸ Viggiano, "Venezia e la chiesa greca," pp. 23–24.

²⁰⁹ Paladini, *'Un caos che spaventa'*, pp. 183–84.

²¹⁰ Larry Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs. The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford, 2001), pp. 76–81.

²¹¹ Pignatorre, *Memorie storiche*, 2:185.

²¹² Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs*, pp. 11, 81.

There was even an initiative to settle Cephalonians in the new Russian province of Crimea.²¹³ During the following Russo-Turkish War (1778–92), the Ionians acted as corsairs, and a Russian general settled in Venetian Ithaca to direct their operations.²¹⁴ These were on the one hand manifestations of a nascent national consciousness of Greeks and, on the other, symptoms of Venice's limited ability to cope with such developments.

Russian intervention brought to the front ethnic issues, in which politics and religion were involved in creating a new sense of identity. The new language of emancipation may have strengthened anti-Venetian feeling among certain colonial elites, such as the restive leaders of certain clans in Cephalonia, an issue that will be discussed below.

VII. *Collective and Individual Fidelities*

Communities and Councils

"Our loyal subject(s)" (*fedele, fedeli nostri*) is the term often used in official Venetian documents when referring to the inhabitants of the overseas colonies, and the same terms appear in petitions presented by the colonial subjects themselves.²¹⁵ Beyond the daily contacts of the latter with Venice's magistrates and their agents (judges, tax farmers, soldiers, heralds, etc.), negotiation between the "loyal subjects" and Venice, which styled itself "The Dominant" (*La Dominante*), was conducted in two main forms—collectively, through the councils or other collective bodies of the subject territories and their representatives, or individually, through petitions presented to the Senate (through the *Collegio*) or the Signory.

The communal councils were essentially urban institutions, although they generally had pretensions to represent all inhabitants of the territory for which the town concerned constituted a political and administrative center. Town councils existed nearly everywhere in the Venetian *stato da mar*, and wherever they had not existed on a regular basis before the Venetian takeover, Venice created them, or allowed them to develop, as

²¹³ Viggiano, "Venezia e le isole del Levante," pp. 768–69.

²¹⁴ Miller, "The Ionian Islands," pp. 236–37.

²¹⁵ E.g., Elly Yotopoulou-Sisilianou, ed., *Πρεσβείες της Βενετοκρατούμενης Κερκύρας (16ος-18ος Αι.)*. Πηγή για σχεδίασμα ανασύνθεσης της Εποχής (Athens, 2002), passim. On the concept of fidelity in the context of Venice's *stato da mar*, see Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis*, pp. 47–82.

it did, for example, in the Istrian province of Pinguente in 1420,²¹⁶ in 16th-century Cyprus,²¹⁷ or in the late 17th-century Morea.²¹⁸

Unlike the main urban centers of the Venetian *terraferma*, those of the *stato da mar*, though in many cases with a communal tradition of their own, had not been (except for Cyprus) capitals of territorial states before the Venetian takeover, and their elites were not as powerful as their *terraferma* homologues. Nevertheless, the communal councils of the overseas dominions still had considerable autonomy in managing local affairs, an autonomy that tended to grow in the course of the four centuries surveyed here.

Karapidakis's study of the community of Corfu may serve as an example for the development of these institutions.²¹⁹ A pre-existing urban council of some sort predated the Venetian takeover. About a century after the latter event, apparently following the growth of the council resulting from a growing number of Corfiots who gained the status of citizens (which entitled them to be council members), a smaller council, the council of 150, was created in 1484. Its members were elected each year from a pool of citizens who had previously served in various public offices.²²⁰ Over a century later, in order to assure a more orderly decision-making process, an even smaller council, the *Conclava*, was created, charged with preparing the deliberations of the greater bodies.²²¹ This tripartite structure was reminiscent of that of the *Collegio*, the Senate, and the Great Council in Venice, which probably served as an institutional model. The *Conclava*, established by a ducal decree of 1627, included three judges, four syndics (the Latin and Greek heads of the community), two *censori* (who controlled the legality of the council's procedures), three *capitolari* (in charge of drafting the demands sent to Venice), and if necessary, also the

²¹⁶ Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 37.

²¹⁷ Benjamin Arbel, "Urban Assemblies and Town Councils in Frankish and Venetian Cyprus," in Theodore Papadopoulos and B. Englezaki, eds., *Πρακτικά του Δευτέρου Διεθνούς Κυπριολογικού Συνεδρίου*, 3 vols (Nicosia, 1986), 2:203–13, repr. in Arbel, *Cyprus*, article no. IV.

²¹⁸ Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," pp. 331–32, 346; Cozzi, "La Repubblica di Venezia in Morea," pp. 750–53; Alexis Malliaris, "Population Exchange and Integration of Immigrant Communities in the Venetian Morea, 1687–1715," in Siriol Davies, and Jack L. Davis, eds., *Between Venice and Istanbul. Colonial Landscapes in Early Modern Greece* (Athens, 2007), pp. 97–109.

²¹⁹ Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis*.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp. 120–21, 159 n. 74. Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, p. 51; Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 272–78; Nicolas Karapidakis, "La formazione di un ceto di potere a Corfù nel XV secolo," in Chryssa Maltezou and Gherardo Ortalli, eds., *Venezia e le Isole Ionie* (Venice, 2005), pp. 105–75.

²²¹ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 299–302.

Provveditori alla sanità. Like the Venetian *Collegio*, the *Conclava* became the body that decided which matters were to be brought for deliberation in the councils, at what stage, and in what manner. Although a few feudal families were represented in the Corfiot community council, membership in this body was originally not associated with noble status. However, already in the 16th century it tended to be a preserve of certain families who, in the 17th century, styled themselves “noblemen.”²²²

Zante’s council seems to have been modeled on that of Corfu, and the same goes as far as Cephalonia is concerned, although with greater functional difficulties. On Cerigo, a council of 30 members was established in 1572, elected on the basis of property qualifications. The council of Santa Maura, established following its occupation in 1684, operated in a similar manner and was reformed in 1760.²²³

Crete, as in many other respects, was different from all other maritime territories in this regard as well. At the beginning its councils were replicas of the Venetian ones, with only Venetian patricians as their members. There was a Cretan Great Council, a Senate, and even a Council of Ten. Another body, not modeled after the Venetian one, was the council of feudatories. However, in the course of time, local dignitaries, alongside Venetians and others, obtained recognition as “Cretan noblemen” and, as such, were entitled to be members of one of the three councils of noblemen that existed in Candia, Rettimo, and La Canea. But the marked presence of Venetians in all councils still constituted the main difference between the Cretan councils and those of all other overseas colonies.²²⁴

In the kingdom of Cyprus, before the Venetian takeover, there had been the High Court, a feudal institution that was rarely convened and, both in Nicosia and Famagusta, some sort of loose framework of *universitates*, which had no active role in the administration of the kingdom. During the Genoese occupation of Famagusta (1373–1464), a corporate body of the Genoese settlers seems to have existed there. Venice abolished the Cypriot *Haute Cour*, since it also had some flavor of sovereignty, but it considered favorably the request of the representatives of both Nicosia

²²² Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis*, pp. 120, 123.

²²³ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 309–12; Miller, “The Ionian Islands,” pp. 224, 226–27; Despina Vlassi, “Η αναμόρφωση του συμβουλίου της Κεφαλονιάς από το Γενικό Προβλεπτή της Θάλασσας Giovanni Battista Vitturi (1751),” *ΣΤ’ Διεθνές Πανιώνιο Συνέδριο, Ζάκυνθος*, 23–27 Σεπτεμβρίου 1997. *Πρακτικά*, 2 vols (Salonica/Athens, 2000–01), 2:321–35.

²²⁴ Anastasia Papadia-Lala, *Ο θρασυμός*, pp. 52–62, 94–100.

and Famagusta to set up urban councils that would be involved in the administration of the island.²²⁵

Like in Corfu, the urban council of Nicosia included both members of the feudal nobility and burghers, and, as in Corfu, the feudal noblemen were the most prominent group in this body (although in Corfu they were much fewer).²²⁶ However, Venice also allowed the *popolo*, or commoners, of Nicosia to set up a separate council in Cyprus. Unlike the *popolo* in Dalmatian towns, which was predominantly composed of members of the middle class, the *popolo* of Nicosia included members of artisan guilds. Membership in the council of Famagusta, a town whose social composition had a more plebeian character compared to Nicosia, was also based on the local guilds. Thus in Cyprus, Venice was ready to take decisions that it was either unable or unwilling to take in other territories, namely, to let leaders of the more popular strata to organize into councils of their own. Although the powers given to these councils were relatively modest, the uniqueness of this case requires explanation. Cyprus was Venice's biggest and richest colony; Nicosia eventually became the biggest town in the *stato da mar* (about 25,000 inhabitants in the 1560s); and Cyprus was the *Dominante's* farthest colony. There was also the idiosyncratic political character of the island kingdom, in which Venice inherited a constitutional tradition that gave the ruler ample powers to intervene in every field. Thus, being in need of a wider consensual base for its rule in the biggest, richest, most populated, and most remote colony, and not being limited in its options by obligations taken at the moment of the island's occupation, Venice could allow itself to take measures that it could not or would not take in other parts of its composite empire.

In Dalmatia and Albania there were urban councils that predated the Venetian occupation. Membership in the Council of Zara was an exclusive domain of the aristocracy, comprising 70 men in the mid-16th century. The latter elected counselors who assisted the Venetian governor in administering justice.²²⁷ A similar institution, the *Maggior Consiglio*, operated at Budua, where the council members, also considered noblemen, annually elected three judges who assisted the Venetian *podestà* in civil cases (in which local laws and customs predominated), and the elder of whom even served as temporary *podestà* in case of the absence of the

²²⁵ Arbel, "Urban Assemblies."

²²⁶ Cf. Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis*, pp. 116–17, 119.

²²⁷ Sander, *Urban Elites*, pp. 75–76.

Venetian one. The council also elected two procurators, four *deputati alla sanità*, and two *signori di notte*.²²⁸ Membership in the councils tended to be hereditary and, consequently, also became a criterion for nobility. By contrast, Veglia presents an exceptional case in the Dalmatian context, since commoners also participated in the communal council as full members and could be elected to public offices.²²⁹

Another exceptional type of organization is that of far-away Tinos, where there were two communal councils, one of the so-called "citizens" and another one, denominated "General Council," which also included the leaders of the rural communities.²³⁰

Following the conquest of the Morea in the 1680s, town councils, which had not existed under the Ottomans, were instituted throughout the peninsula. Their members had the status of citizens, which entailed certain privileges, such as exemption from forced labor and billeting of soldiers, and the possibility to be elected to public offices and bishoprics. In this area, town councils were meant to constitute a counterweight to the Orthodox bishops, who had enjoyed considerable influence during the Ottoman domination and were also linked to the Oecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Yet in the absence of a previous communal tradition, this short experience does not seem to have been very successful.²³¹

The colonial councils were the main channel of collective negotiation between Venice, represented by its own councils, and its overseas subjects. The Republic, whose system of government was based on such collective bodies, probably preferred to negotiate with its overseas subjects through similar institutions. The communal council was an essential instrument of government, on the one hand enabling local elites to take part in the administration of their lands and gain some profit and honor from this activity and, on the other, enabling Venice to conduct a continuous dialogue with its colonial subjects.²³² But beyond that, from the very beginning of its rule in any territory and all the more so in the distant overseas territories, Venice simply had no other choice. This was the only way to administer these territories, to care for the necessities of daily life, to assure the functioning of the fiscal and judicial systems with

²²⁸ Giuseppe (József) Gelcich, *Memorie storiche sulle Bocche Di Cattaro* (Zadar, 1880), pp. 177–78.

²²⁹ Pederin, "Die Venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe," p. 125.

²³⁰ Papadia-Lala, *Ο Θεσμός*, pp. 204–19.

²³¹ Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," pp. 331–32, 346; Cozzi, "La Repubblica di Venezia in Morea," pp. 750–53; Malliaris, "Population Exchange."

²³² Papadia-Lala, *Ο Θεσμός*, pp. 100–03.

all their inevitable imperfections, and to gain recognition of its own status of *Dominante* and as just arbitrator in territories often torn by internal conflicts. The Republic greatly depended on local elites, organized in the communal councils, to function as intermediaries between itself and the rest of the population, and it therefore was ready to defend their prerogatives and privileges, despite their abuse of power and corruption. From the Venetian standpoint, as from that of all other colonial powers, there was simply no other way of keeping the empire together.

Statutes and Capitoli

In those overseas colonies in which corporative bodies, with claims of representing the entire territory, existed prior to the Venetian takeover, the Venetian occupation was followed by negotiation with the representatives of these bodies, resulting in the formulation of statutes (*statuti*) or to the confirmation by the Senate of existing statutes with a few changes. These documents later gained the status of a constitutional document, tenaciously defended by local councils whenever they believed that their rights were infringed upon in some way. In the Dalmatian towns in particular, the statutes were considered a sacred code that could not be modified by any means, symbolizing divine justice and legitimate rule.²³³ However, with the passage of time, new problems arose and new demands were raised, which necessitated additions or changes in the laws that governed the relations between the various colonies and the *Dominante*. The mechanism of the *capitoli* was intended to satisfy these needs.

The statutes regulating local life and relations with the ruling power were periodically updated and reformed through a process of negotiations with representatives sent by the communities to Venice with a list of requests (*capitoli*), which could then be approved (entirely or partially), rejected or deferred pending the collection of further information.²³⁴ In this way, the rules governing the relations between Venice and its colonies could develop according to changing circumstances, offering the Venetian subjects some recompense for their loyalty, and giving Venice an opportunity to demonstrate its good will toward its loyal subjects. In bigger territories, *capitoli* could be presented separately by representatives of different towns, such as those of the three Cretan councils of Candia,

²³³ Pederin, "Die venezianische verwaltung... und ihre Organe," pp. 109–110; Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," 194; Ortalli, "Il ruolo degli statuti."

²³⁴ E.g., Yotopoulou-Sisilianou, *Πρεσβείες*.

Rettimo, and Canea, or those of the Cypriot communities of Nicosia (two councils) and Famagusta, and, exceptionally, even Cerines.²³⁵ Different social groups, not necessarily formally recognized as corporate bodies, could also occasionally send lists of requests, as in the case of the embassy of the citizens (*cittadini*) and the commoners of Nicosia and Candia, or of the *stradioti* (military settlers) of Cyprus.²³⁶

Whenever possible, Venice was ready to accept the requests of its colonial subjects, especially when they did not harm its own interests and did not involve great expenditure, or involved no expenditure at all. Moderate generosity is probably the right term to define the Republic's attitude in such moments. Occasionally, even requests that clearly required great expenditure, especially when related to the defense of the overseas territories, fell upon favorable ears. From the early 16th century to the early 18th, the Republic consented to its subjects' demands to fortify their towns, projects that always necessitated great expenditure, even if partly covered by contributions of local subjects.²³⁷ The periodical updating of the statutes in response to the *capitoli*, together with the decisions of local governors or *provveditori generali*, which also became part of the local legal framework, subject to confirmation by the Senate,²³⁸ enabled the Venetian courts in the *stato da mar* to operate without losing contact with changing realities.²³⁹

Public Service and Local Officials

The most important occupations of the urban councils were caring for the basic needs of local society, such as food supply, public health, poor relief, and education; election of council members to offices and to smaller councils; and drafting demands from Venice. In councils that had a pre-established number of members, the councils occasionally dealt with

²³⁵ E.g., Giorgio [Yeoryios] S. Ploumidis, *Οι βενετοκρατούμενες ελληνικές χώρες μεταξύ του δευτέρου και του τρίτου τουρκοβενετικού πόλεμου (1503–1537)* (Ioannina, 1974), pp. 137–47; idem, *Κανονισμοί της νησου Κύπρου* (Ioannina, 1987), pp. 9–45, 46–55, 57–74.

²³⁶ Papadia-Lala, *Ο Θεσμός*, pp. 100–03. For the medieval precedents of this practice, see Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne*, pp. 208–11; Maria Dourou-Iliopoulou, "Πρεσβεία των κατοίκων του βενετοκρατούμενου Χάνδακα στα μέσα του 16ου αιώνα," *Παρουσία* 5 (1987), 355–97.

²³⁷ E.g., Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, p. 90; Gilles Grivaud, "Aux confins de l'empire colonial vénitien: Nicosie et ses fortifications," *Επετηρίς του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών* 13/16 (1984–87), 273.

²³⁸ Kolyvà, "Obedir et essequir," p. 492.

²³⁹ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto"; Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," p. 970. E.g., Jacoby, *La féodalité*, p. 259 (regarding Corfu); Arbel, "Η Κύπρος," pp. 460–66.

the election of new members. In Cyprus, the Council of Nicosia was also allowed to elect several district governors from among its members, to elect the Greek Orthodox bishop of Nicosia, and to propose candidates for money fiefs offered by the *Dominante* to needy members of the higher classes.²⁴⁰

Most of these councils had an income of their own, which served for the management of several local institutions, such as the *Monte di Pietà*, which provided consumption loans for the poor; the *Fondaco delle biave*, which was in charge of local grain supply for civil purposes; the *Lazzaretto*, or quarantine institution and plague hospital; as well as various sorts of other hospitals. Public schools were also maintained by the communities.²⁴¹

The election to offices was an important activity, considering that nearly all of them entitled their holders to receive salaries and other forms of income. The number of offices tended to rise in the course of Venetian rule of the territories concerned. Even a small center such as Umago, in Istria, a town that in 1790 had merely 1534 inhabitants, counted 26 public offices in the second half of the 18th century, and their salaries absorbed about 50 per cent of the commune's expenses.²⁴²

The plethora of offices held by local subjects, including those in the Venetian colonial administration itself, could hardly be controlled by the Venetian governors and often proved to be rather harmful to the public administration. For example, the financial officers who were elected by the community of Corfu to serve in the colony's treasury (*camera fiscale*) often lacked financial or administrative capabilities, which was a source of great disorder in the treasury's bookkeeping. The Republic's consequent inability to control these books opened the gate for further corruption. In 1606, the *Provveditore Generale da Mar* authorized the governors of Corfu and their successors to dismiss incompetent treasury officers and to ask the community council to elect others instead.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Arbel, "Urban assemblies"; Arbel, "L'elezione dei prelati greci."

²⁴¹ E.g. Marianna Kolyva-Karaleka, "Για το 'Fontego' της Ζακύνθου (1600–1700 αι.). Το πρόβλημα του επισιτισμού," *"Ο άρτος ημών."* Από το σιτάρι στο ψωμί. Γ' Τριήμερο Εργασίας. Πήλιο, 10–12 Απριλίου 1992 (Athens, 1994), pp. 200–04; Anastasia Papadia-Lala, *Ευαγή και νοσοκομειακά ιδρύματα στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη* (Venice, 1996); Christos Th. Desyllas, *Η τράπεζα των φτωχών. Το Monte di Pietà της Κέρκυρας (1630–1864)* (Athens, 2006); Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," p. 192 (Sebenico, 1624), p. 193 (Cattaro, 1636), p. 199 (Spalato, 1680).

²⁴² Gullino, *Atlante*, CD-Rom; Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 54.

²⁴³ Zannini, "Problemi di contabilità pubblica," p. 93.

But the fault also lay on Venice's shoulders. An enquiry concerning the staff of the treasuries in Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia carried out in 1725, as well as a general survey of all bureaucratic offices in Istria, Dalmatia, and "the Levant" carried out in 1783, revealed that a great part of these offices had been granted by special privilege (*grazia*) or sold (which often stood for the same thing) and that some local families even dominated several offices connected to the same sector.²⁴⁴ Venality of bureaucratic offices had been a widespread phenomenon in the Venetian state since the 16th century, and its wide diffusion in the *stato da mar* was not an exceptional phenomenon. Offices were offered for sale during periods of crisis, such as the war of the League of Cambrai and the war of Crete.²⁴⁵ Yet the distance of the overseas territories, the scarce presence of Venetian officials and magistrates, and sometimes their own involvement in local misbehavior must have increased the negative impact of this phenomenon in these provinces.

The closing of the urban councils to newcomers, which, like in the *terraferma*, characterized many communal councils in the *stato da mar*—in Istria, Dalmatia, Albania, and the Ionian Islands—created social and political pressure from individuals and groups that were left outside the privileged circle but had the capabilities and motivations to participate in the local political scene. In a few cases, the mechanism of *grazie* could be used as a means to join these councils. Thus, after 1611, the procedure of *grazia* remained the only way of joining the urban council of Corfu for candidates who were able to prove that their ancestors had been members of the council for three generations.²⁴⁶ Yet Venice could not use such a pressure valve everywhere or at any moment. Consequently, it occasionally had to deal with severe conflicts, some of them rather violent, resulting from unsatisfied ambitions.

The so-called *popolani* of the Dalmatian towns, who in 1510–12 rose against the local noblemen's exclusive hold of the urban councils, were prosperous merchants and relatively affluent artisans. In most cases they were economically stronger than the noblemen who refused to let them share their privileges.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, though not ignoring these realities

²⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 93–95.

²⁴⁵ See Roland Mousnier, "Le trafic des offices à Venise," *Nouvelle revue historique de droit français et étranger* ser. IV, 30 (1952), 552–65; Zannini, "Problemi di contabilità pubblica," p. 94.

²⁴⁶ Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*, pp. 162–63; Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis*, pp. 114–15.

²⁴⁷ Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*, pp. 215–16.

and notwithstanding the attachment of the *popolani* to Venice, which was generally stronger in this area than that of the noblemen, Venice was not ready to accept the *popolani*'s demand of full share in the communal councils. However, the Republic often accepted less radical demands presented by the *popolani* of Dalmatian towns. Thus, after occupying Zara, Venice rejected the attempts by the local nobility to have decisive influence in the judicial sphere and to have the sole right to elect its members as governors of what they claimed to be districts under Zara's jurisdiction (such as the islands of Pago, Arbe, Cherso, and Ossero). On Curzola, following the demand of the local *popolani*, the governor was elected from 1441 onwards in Venice's Great Council, not in the council of Curzola's commune (dominated by the local nobility) as it had been during the first 20 years of Venetian rule.²⁴⁸ Venice also accepted the demand presented by the commoners of Zara to nominate candidates from their rank as interpreters in local courts of law and to open the profession of advocates to commoners and foreigners.²⁴⁹ But concessions of this kind were not universally applied. For example, in Capodistria, similar requests were rejected by Venice as late as in 1769.²⁵⁰

The economic and social dynamism of the Dalmatian burghers resulted already in the 15th century in the creation in several towns of a *università di popolo e cittadini*, a corporate body parallel to that of the commune.²⁵¹ Thus, in the mid-16th century, the *università* of Zara's *popolo* assembled and drafted demands (*capitoli*) of its own to be presented to Venice, and the local governor was instructed by the Signory to let them do so without hindrance. Similar developments took place in Pago (Pag) and Lesina (Hvar).²⁵² During the 17th and 18th centuries this process developed further, and the burghers, although always excluded from the communal council, found other ways to consolidate their influence, especially in the framework of professional and religious confraternities, which sometimes operated as the *popolo's università*.²⁵³ Another field in which the growing influence of the *popolo* can be discerned is the administration of various

²⁴⁸ Ortalli, "Il ruolo degli statuti," p. 207 n. 32.

²⁴⁹ Cozzi, "La politica del diritto," p. 74.

²⁵⁰ Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 109. This was also the case in Pirano in the late 18th century.

²⁵¹ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 154; Pederin, "Die venezianische verwaltung... und ihre Organe," p. 105.

²⁵² Pederin, "Die venezianische verwaltung... und ihre Organe," pp. 104, 123.

²⁵³ E.g., *ibid.*, p. 124 (the *Scuola della Misericordia*, founded in Zara in 1572); Pederin, "Die Venezianische Verwaltung Dalmatiens... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," pp. 184, 195, 216–19, 245.

urban institutions, such as the pawnshop (*Monte di Pietà*), the grain store (*Fontego*) and the quarantine house (*Lazzaretto*), which appeared in growing numbers in Venetian Dalmatia and Albania from the 16th century onwards. In 17th-century Cattaro, the *Monte di Pietà* was even administered in collaboration between the local noblemen and *popolani* on equal footing.²⁵⁴ A recurrent demand raised by the *popolo* and generally accepted by Venice concerned the nomination of interpreters in the chanceries and courts of Dalmatian towns.²⁵⁵ This may indicate that urban society in Venetian Dalmatia was predominantly Slavic/Croatian in its culture and that many members of the popular classes did not speak or understand Italian.²⁵⁶

Despite the general weakening of the nobility's exclusive right of representation and of its hold on local administration, in nearly all Dalmatian towns the communities' councils remained closed to commoners. While following without hindrance the continuous consolidation of the commoners' position, and also recognizing their right to organize in their own *università*, Venice honored its original pledge to defend the commune and its statutes, and the nobility succeeded in maintaining its image as the guardian of local autonomy, reflected in the local *statuti*.²⁵⁷ During the 17th and 18th centuries Dalmatian noblemen even regained some power as military governors (*capitani, governatori, colonnelli*) in the newly acquired areas of the Dalmatian hinterland.²⁵⁸

By allowing the Dalmatian commoners to organize independently, by negotiating with them and often also accepting their demands, Venice succeeded in widening the social basis of fidelity to the *Dominante*,²⁵⁹ and by defending at the same time the noblemen's nearly exclusive hold of the communal councils, Venice also succeeded in securing the noblemen's

²⁵⁴ Pederin, "Die Venezianische Verwaltung Dalmatiens... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," p. 193.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 186, 210–12; Pederin, "Die Venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe," pp. 104, 120.

²⁵⁶ Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe," p. 116. On the čakavski dialect, spoken on the islands and along the coast between Fiume and Spalato, see Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 156.

²⁵⁷ Ortalli, "Il ruolo degli statuti." Oliver Schmitt suggests that Venice recognized in 1445 the right of *popolani* to be part of the commune of Budua, basing his conclusion on the decision to allow them to enjoy the income of properties bequeathed to the commune and take part in their administration, Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien*, pp. 469–70.

²⁵⁸ Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung Dalmatiens... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," p. 189; Paladino, *Un caos che spaventa*, pp. 251–52.

²⁵⁹ Praga describes this process somewhat exaggeratedly as "the equalization of the rights of citizens and the levelling of social classes," Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 153.

fidelity. The latter, in fact, would not have been able to withstand the growing pressure from below without Venice's backing.

Filippo Maria Paladini has turned our attention to another elite with whom Venice had to negotiate in Dalmatia during the 17th and 18th centuries: leaders of the *craine*, those organized rural communities in eastern Dalmatia, often based on big family groups, clans, or tribes. These leaders, who were empowered by Venice with military and fiscal responsibilities in return for privileges and grants, sometimes bore official titles that were inherited from their former positions under Ottoman rule. The social and political network of fidelities thus became more complex during the last century of Venetian rule in this area.²⁶⁰

Individual Fidelities

In addition to the interaction between community councils and other groups and the central organs of government in Venice, a parallel dialogue was continuously maintained between the Republic and individual subjects in the colonies. These two channels of negotiation, the institutional or collective one and the private one (on its colonial end), could also be in conflict with one another, as a result of the growing venality of offices from the 16th century onwards and of the granting of *grazie*.

The procedure of *grazie* was an important mechanism of negotiation between Venetian subjects and the central government. *Grazie* were concessions or favors, permissions, pardons, remissions of debt, and awards of privileges and offices granted by the doge in response to petitions after due confirmation by the highest Venetian councils. Monique O'Connell, who has studied *grazie* accorded during several decades of the first half of the 15th century, noted that between one-sixth and one-fourth of such concessions were granted during that period to residents of the maritime dominions, well over half of them residents of Crete.²⁶¹

Grazie could concern a wide spectrum of requests, ranging from banal building concessions and awards of jobs or pensions to pardon for murder or even treason. The *Serenissima* knew how to reward its loyal subjects, by responding favorably to their requests or by granting them, on its own initiative, material and honorific rewards for their service, while abstaining from doing so with regard to others considered to be unfaithful or

²⁶⁰ Paladini, 'Un caos che spaventa,' pp. 39–40.

²⁶¹ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 97–102.

unreliable.²⁶² Venetian magistrates who served in overseas territories or had served there in the past were requested to express their opinion on the character and past performance of individuals who presented petitions of various kinds.

The concession of noble status and noble titles was a measure taken by all *ancien régime* rulers for building networks of loyalty, and Venice, despite its Republican ethos, used this stratagem too, even with a certain generosity, which arguably was greater in the *stato da mar* than elsewhere. These tactics sometimes combined the strengthening of links of fidelity to the *Dominante* with a response to social changes in the *stato da mar*. It is clearly reflected in the emergence of a new status of nobility in 15th-century Crete, including subjects who were not necessarily Venetians and not necessarily Latins, as the old constitutional arrangements had required. The process, which began by granting individual *grazie*, ended up in 1463 with the transformation of the council of feudatories into the council Cretan noblemen, which enabled a wider spectrum of Cretans to take part in the local political scene.²⁶³ In the late 17th-century Morea, where local elites on whom the Republic could rely were lacking, Venice “imported” them from other areas by creating new titles of “counts” that were awarded to worthy Greeks from Athens and Zante.²⁶⁴ Similar titles were also given to several Dalmatian noblemen during the 18th century, as a reward for their loyal services.²⁶⁵

Crete was a big colony with several towns, where economic and administrative activities brought new forces to the forefront of society in various capacities but did not grant these forces the ability to enter the inner ring of the noblemen and their councils. From the 16th century onwards (if not earlier), it was possible for those Cretans, many of them Greeks, to receive

²⁶² Pederin, “Die venezianische Verwaltung... und ihre Organe,” pp. 108, 122; Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien*, pp. 47–71; Papadia-Lala, *O θεςμός*, p. 339.

²⁶³ Anastasia Papadaki, “Η χρητική ευγένεια στην κοινωνία της βενετοκρατούμενης Κρήτης,” in Chryssa Maltezou, ed., *Ricchi e poveri nella società dell'Oriente grecolatino* (Athens, 1998), pp. 305–18; Kostas Lambrinos, “Il vocabolario sociale nella Creta veneziana e i problemi del censimento di Triv[is]an. Approcci interpretativi e desiderata di ricerca,” in Maltezou, Tzavara, and Vlassi, eds., *I Greci durante La venetocrazia*, p. 184.

²⁶⁴ Malliaris, “Population Exchange,” p. 104.

²⁶⁵ Pederin, “Die venezianische Verwaltung Dalmatiens... (XVI–XVIII Jh.),” p. 220. Pederin mentions the Medici (from Zara), the Casotti (from Scardona), and the Dragojević; to whom we could add the Borelli from Zara, awarded the title of Counts of Aurana (Vrana, later Wrana) in 1752.

by *grazia* the status of citizen of one of Crete's towns.²⁶⁶ Venice's policy of pragmatic conservatism thus resulted in the crystallization of another category of respectability. In medieval Crete, the terms *civis* or *burgensis* were used in Cretan sources in ways that sometimes seem ambiguous to modern historians. Thiriet, whose comprehensive study stops at the mid-15th century, distinguished between "full citizens" (*citoyens complets*) and "simple city dwellers" (*simples bourgeois*). He refers to "citizen right" (*droit de cité*) as a coveted status, being the only one that gave a right to non-Venetians to exercise trade without any restriction.²⁶⁷ But this interpretation, according to which a juridical concept of Cretan citizenship existed in medieval Crete, is not shared by all historians, especially not by all medievalists. Thus, it has been claimed that the terms *civis* or *burgensis* used in Venetian sources of the Middle Ages with respect to Crete (and other places except Venice) simply denoted permanent inhabitants of Cretan towns or that they were synonyms for the term *habitor*.²⁶⁸ Yet in view of the post-medieval evidence, which will be described presently, and in the absence of any clear indication concerning the date in which citizenship in the Cretan towns became a formal legal status, Thiriet's claims cannot be easily discarded.

Around the turn from the 15th to the 16th century, the term *cittadini* seems to have become less ambiguous in Cretan sources, assuming the significance of a specific social status, which entailed certain privileges. The Cretan *cittadini* were free from the duties borne by commoners, such as the obligation to serve as rowers in the galleys or to work on fortifications. Furthermore, like Venetians and Cretan noblemen, Cretan citizens were entitled to engage in international trade. In the early 17th century, citizenship would also be required for employment in public offices and for work as a notary. But already in 1561, when a delegation of Candia's commoners and citizens came to Venice, different *capitoli* were presented separately by the *cittadini* and the commoners. The fact that in 1561, or

²⁶⁶ Papadia-Lala, *Ο Θεσμός*, pp. 121–25; Anastasia Papadia-Lala, "'Cittadini' και κατοικοί πόλεων. Κοινωνική διαστρωμάτωση στα βενετοκρατούμενα Χανιά (μέσα 16ου/17ου αι.)," *Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Συμποσίου Ιστορίας: Νεοελληνική Πόλη, Οθωμανικές Καθηρονομίες Και Ελληνικό Κράτος*. Αθήνα, 26/28 Σεπτεμβρίου 1984, Ερμούπολη, 29/30 Σεπτεμβρίου 1984, 2 vols (Athens, 1985), 1:59–66.

²⁶⁷ Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne*, pp. 279–80.

²⁶⁸ David Jacoby, "Les Vénitiens naturalisés dans l'Empire Byzantin: un aspect de l'expansion de Venise en Romanie du XIII^e au milieu du XV^e siècle," *Travaux et Mémoires* 8 (1981), 219, repr. in Jacoby, *Studies on the Crusader States and on Venetian Expansion* (Northampton, 1989), article no. IX (with examples from no later than the mid-15th cent.).

somewhat earlier, the *cittadini* (and the *popolani* as well) were able to convene in order to elect their procurators and draft their demands is rather significant, even if this initiative did not lead to the creation of new constitutional councils.²⁶⁹ Giacomo Foscarini, *Provveditore Generale* of Crete in 1574–77, also refers in his *relazione* to the *cittadini* and the *popolani* as two distinct groups in the island's towns.²⁷⁰

A sort of compensation for the inability to participate in the councils, but also a kind of temporary phase towards the attainment of noble status, was the organization, in the second half of the 16th century, of a fraternity of Greek *cittadini* (πολίτες). Several members of this organization later succeeded in becoming noblemen.²⁷¹

As from 1616, citizenship was required in Crete for employment in public offices, and candidates had to be in possession of a *prova di cittadinanza* that could be acquired only under certain conditions: being at least 25 years of age; being of legitimate birth and a descendant of respectable parents who had not been engaged in mechanical arts for three generations; residence in town; and a good social reputation. This looks like a belated imitation of a similar development that concerned the Venetian *cittadini originarii* about a century earlier.²⁷² In any case, the emergence of Cretan *cittadini* as another respectable group within Cretan urban society appears to have been a successful way of assuring the fidelity of new or not-so-new elites that existed in early modern Cretan towns, especially members of the Greek-speaking town dwellers. A census carried out in Crete in 1644 reflects this reality: in Candia there were 14,451 inhabitants, among them 118 noblemen and 164 *cittadini*; in Canea there were 10,400 inhabitants, 97 of whom were noblemen and 153 *cittadini*; and in Rettimo there were 8038 inhabitants, 65 of whom were noblemen and 70 *cittadini*.²⁷³

It should be emphasized here that the significance of the terminology denoting civic status was not identical throughout Venice's dominions.

²⁶⁹ Papadia-Lala, *O thesmós*, p. 123.

²⁷⁰ Lamansky, *Secrets d'État de Venise*, 2:632.

²⁷¹ Papadia-Lala, *O thesmós*, p. 124.

²⁷² Aspasia Papadaki, "Αποδείξεις αστικής ιδιότητας στην Κρήτη το 17ο αιώνα (prove di cittadinanza)," *Πεπραγμένα του Ζ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου*, vol. B-2 (Rethimno, 1995), pp. 619–34; Papadia-Lala, *O thesmós*, p. 124.

²⁷³ Manoussos I. Manoussakas, "Η παρά Trivan απογραφή της Κρήτης (1644) και ο δήθεν κατάλογος των κρητικών οικιών Κερκύρας," *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 3 (1949), 51, 55, 57; see also Fotis Baroutsos, "Sovvention per fabricar galioni. Ο βενετικός μερκαντιλισμός και οι αντανάκλασεις του στην κρητική κοινωνία του ύστερου 16ου αιώνα," *Thesuarismata* 29 (1999), 199–202; and Kostas Lambrinos, "Η κοινωνική διάθροιση στη βενετική Κρήτη. Ιεραρχίες, ορολογία και κατάλογοι κοινωνικής θέσης," *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 31 (2011), 221–39.

Whereas in early modern Crete the *cittadini* developed into something similar to the Venetian *cittadini originarii*—an intermediate group enjoying several privileges, except for the more distinguished ones reserved for the nobility—the same term simply denoted in Corfu those subjects who were members of the urban council.²⁷⁴ In Famagusta it also denoted an affiliation with the local urban council, but the social extraction of the *cittadini* there was different from that in Corfu, since council membership in Famagusta was based on membership in the craftsmen's guilds.²⁷⁵ On the island of Cerigo the *cittadini* constituted the leading group among the local inhabitants, whereas in the Cyclades, according to Slot, they “blended with the feudatories in the same dominating class.”²⁷⁶ A similar diversity characterizes the significance of the term *popolo*, which could denote an agglomeration of middle-class merchants and affluent artisans, as it did in the Dalmatian towns, or members of the artisan guilds, as in the case of Nicosia. In Crete (as in Venice), it was clearly associated, at least from the 16th century onward, with manual labor.²⁷⁷

Fidelity on the individual level could be expressed in many ways. In the upper echelons of society, for example, one such expression can be found in the marriage market. A considerable number of noblemen from the *stato da mar* chose to marry their daughters to Venetian patricians, in this way enhancing their ability to use Venetian networks of influence and power.²⁷⁸ Other expressions of attachment to the *Dominante* were service in public offices, conversion to the Roman Catholic rite and subsequent nomination to prominent ecclesiastical offices, participation in the repression of local uprisings, and, last but not least, involvement, alongside Venetians, in the defense of the colony against Ottoman invasions.

²⁷⁴ On the Venetian *cittadini*, see Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna. I cittadini originari (sec. XVI–XVIII)* (Venice, 1993); Anna Bellavitis, “‘Per cittadini metterete . . .’ La stratificazione della società veneziana cinquecentesca tra norma giuridica e riconoscimento sociale,” *Quaderni storici* 89 (1995), 359–83; Bellavitis, *Identité, mariage, mobilité sociale, citoyennes et citoyens à Venise au XVI^e siècle* (Rome, 2001); James S. Grubb, “Elite Citizens,” in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore/London, 2000), pp. 339–64; Reinhold C. Mueller, *Immigrazione e cittadinanza nella Venezia medievale* (Rome, 2010).

²⁷⁵ Arbel, “Urban Assemblies,” pp. 210–11.

²⁷⁶ Maltezou, *Tα Κύπερα*, pp. 63–69; Slot, *Archipelagus*, pp. 49–50.

²⁷⁷ On the Venetian *popolani*, see Dennis Romano, *Patricians and Popolani. The Social Foundations of the Venetian Renaissance State* (Baltimore, 1987), pp. 29–32.

²⁷⁸ O’Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 64, 66–72; Arbel, “Η Κύπρος,” p. 496; Benjamin Arbel, “Greek Magnates in Venetian Cyprus: The Case of the Synglitico Family,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995), 331–32, repr. in Arbel, *Cyprus*, article no. VII.

Finally, the migration from one Venetian colony to another as a consequence of Ottoman conquests can also be considered an expression of fidelity to Venice, and the same applies, at least partly, to the settlement of colonial subjects in Venice itself, where communities of Dalmatians, Albanians and Greeks, most of them originating from the overseas colonies, settled in great numbers, and sometimes gained prominent positions in Venetian society.²⁷⁹

VIII. *The Burden of Defense*

General Characteristics

Venice was not totally innocent of offensive intentions or actions in the maritime front. The image of a continuous contraction of the *stato da mar* during the early modern centuries is partly misleading, as witnessed

²⁷⁹ E.g., Marianna Kolyvā, "Varie siano le anime de li abitanti. Προσφυγικοί πληθυσμοί στη Ζάκυνθο (16ος αιώνας)," in Chrysa A. Maltezou, ed., *Πλούσιοι και φτωχοί στην κοινωνία της ελληνολατινικής ανατολής* (Venice, 1998), pp. 419–27 (settlement in Zante); Stamatoula S. Zapandi, Κεφαλονιά 1500–1571. Η συγκρότηση της κοινωνίας του νησιού (Thessalonika, 1999), p. 142 (settlement in Cephalonia); Benjamin Arbel, "Régime colonial, colonisation et peuplement: le cas de Chypre sous la domination vénitienne," *Sources. Travaux historiques* 43–44 (1995), p. 101 and n. 27, repr. in Arbel, *Cyprus*, article no. III (refugees from Nauplia in Cyprus); Marianna Kolyvā-Karaleka, "Αποκατάσταση Ναυπλιωτών και Μονεμβασιωτών στην Κρήτη το 1548," *Byzantinisch-Neugrichischen Jahrbücher* 22 (1983), 375–452 (refugees from Nauplia and Malvasia in Crete); Kostas T. Tsiknakis, "Κύπριοι πρόσφυγες στην Κρήτη στα τέλη του 16ου αιώνα. Προβλήματα εγκατάστασης," in Chrysa Maltezou, ed., *Κύπρος-Βενετία. Κοινές ιστορικές τύχες* (Venice, 2002), pp. 175–207 (Cypriots in Crete); Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Das venezianische Südosteuropa als Kommunikationsraum (ca. 1400–ca. 1600)," in Gherardo Ortalli and Oliver Schmitt, eds., *Balceni occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo- Der westliche Balkan, der Adriaraum und Venedig (13.–18. Jahrhundert)* (Vienna/Venice, 2009), pp. 90–91 (Cypriots in 17th-century Pola). For settlement in Venice, see, for example, Manoussos I. Manoussakas, "The History of the Greek Confraternity (1498–1982) and the Activity of the Greek Institute of Venice (1966–1982)," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 5 (1989), 320–94; Brunehilde Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia, 1300–1510* (Rome, 1997), pp. 279–87, 435–554; Reinhold C. Mueller, "Greeks in Venice and Venetians in Greece," in Chryssa A. Maltezou, ed., *Ricchi e poveri nella società dell'Oriente grecolatino* (Venice, 1998), pp. 169–80; Giorgio [Yeoryios] S. Ploumidis, "Considerazioni sulla popolazione greca a Venezia nella seconda metà del '500," *Studi veneziani* 14 (1972), 222; Brunehilde Imhaus, "La minorité chypriote de Venise du XVI^e siècle au début du XVII^e siècle," in Yannis Ioannou, Françoise Metral, and Margherite Yon, eds., *Chypre et la Méditerranée orientale* (Lyons, 2000), pp. 33–42; Alain Ducellier, "Les Albanais à Venise aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles," *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967), 405–20; Freddy Thiriet, "Sur les communautés grecques et albanaises à Venise," in Hans Georg Beck, Manoussos Manoussakas, and Agostino Pertusi, eds., *Venezia, centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (secoli XV–XVI)*, 2 vols (Florence, 1977), 1:218–31; Lucia Nadin, *Migrazioni e integrazione. Il caso degli albanesi a Venezia (1479–1552)* (Rome, 2008).

not only by Venice's return to Dalmatia in the early 15th century but also, in later centuries, by its occupation of Cyprus, Veglia, Zante, the Apulian towns, Cephalonia, Santa Maura, the Morea, and Aegina as well as its expansion in Istria and the *Nuovo* and *Nuovissimo Acquisto* in Dalmatia and Albania. Nevertheless, the Republic's main military preoccupations, particularly from the 16th century onward, were defensive in character, and it is to the problems of defense that we shall therefore turn our attention.

The Venetian system of defense reflects a basic conviction that the principal threat to Venetian rule of its overseas dominions was from the big powers that contended with Venice over hegemony in the area, as well as from pirates and corsairs who constituted a continuous menace. This concept seems to have been justified. We shall see that during the period under discussion there were not a few manifestations of disorder in the overseas dominions, yet the number of virtual anti-Venetian insurrections was small and local in character, and only on few occasions was an intervention of a big military force necessary to restore public order.

Venice's chief enemy on the maritime front was the Ottoman Empire, with whom, between 1396 and 1718, the Republic had to engage in 11 military conflicts, all of them somehow related to the *stato da mar* (from 1423 all of them directly related to it).²⁸⁰ We shall mention them here briefly, without specifying the resulting territorial changes. In 1396 Venice was part of the coalition that participated in the Crusade of Nicopolis, which ended disastrously on the Christian side. Between 1415 and 1419, Venice was at war with the Ottoman sultan and even won an impressive victory over the Ottoman navy at Gallipoli (1416). Between 1423 and 1430, the two powers were at war again following Venice's occupation of Thessalonica. In 1453, Venice was involved in the defense of Constantinople against the Ottoman attack on the Byzantine capital. The following wars with the Ottomans took place between 1463 and 1479, between 1499 and 1503, from 1537 to 1540, between 1570 and 1573 (the War of Cyprus), between 1645 and 1669 (the Cretan War), between 1684 and 1699 (the War of Morea), and finally, between 1715 and 1718.

During the 15th century, the Republic also had to cope with the ambitions of Hungary (in the first half of the century and again in 1480). Two Genoese attempts to take Corfu in 1403 and in 1432 were repelled with

²⁸⁰ The Veneto-Ottoman wars are often referred to by ordinary numbers that ignore the first four conflicts. I have avoided using this misleading custom.

the help of local inhabitants.²⁸¹ Venice's participation in the anti-French league in 1495 was used as an opportunity to take hold of several Apulian port towns. Finally, three wars against the Habsburg dynasty were also somehow related to the *stato da mar*: shortly before and during the war of the League of Cambrai (1508–16), in Istria and Apulia; during the war of the League of Cognac (1526–30), in Apulia again; and finally in 1615–17, in the so-called War of Gradisca, or of the Uskoks, in the northern Adriatic.

The Impact on the Countryside

The Republic had to cope several times with a prolonged presence of huge Ottoman armies on its overseas territories, a presence that often resulted in these colonies becoming Ottoman territories. Large armies were involved in the invasions of Negroponte (1470), Corfu (in 1537 and again in 1715), Cyprus (1570–71), Crete (1645–69), and the Morea (1715–18).²⁸² The prolonged presence of big armies had a destructive effect on the local countryside.²⁸³ The problem of defending the rural areas, where most of the population generally lived, was impossible to solve in any significant measure. The number of Corfiots reported to have been taken into slavery by Barbarossa during his invasion of the island in 1537 fluctuates between 7000 and 24,000.²⁸⁴ During the following war in the early 1570s, many Cypriots suffered a similar fate, and even those who could find shelter in the fortified towns were not spared. The lot of Cretans during the 1645–69 war was not much better.

During these wars, several other Venetian territories suffered considerably from raids and incursions. The Ottomans gained access to the Adriatic Sea at Valona in 1414, at Castelnuovo (Herzeg Novi), at the entrance of the Bocche di Cattaro, in 1482, and at Macarsca, at the mouth of the Narenta, in 1499. Consequently, the danger of sea raids on Venetian territories in the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic increased considerably. Incursions that took place in the 1460s and 1470s in the territories of Zara,

²⁸¹ Miller, "The Ionian Islands," p. 227.

²⁸² For Negroponte, see Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 2:299; for Corfu, Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, p. 70; for Cyprus, Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 3:965; for Crete, Detorakis, *History of Crete*, p. 229; for the Morea, Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," p. 352.

²⁸³ For Cyprus, see Benjamin Arbel, "Cypriot Villages from the Byzantine to the British Period: Observations on a Recent Book," *Κέντρο Επιστημονικών Ερευνών. Επετηρίδα* 26 (2000), 452–54.

²⁸⁴ Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, p. 71; Pagratis, ed., *Οι εκθέσεις*, p. 147.

Sebenico, and Spalato ended up by taking thousands of men and women into slavery and carrying off tens of thousands of animals; it also caused the devastation of houses and farms and the burning of crops. During the following war, in July 1499 and in the summer of 1500, Zara and its territory were attacked by an army commanded by the Pasha of Bosnia. It is said that 7000 inhabitants were taken into slavery and 50,000 animals carried away. Similar events occurred in the territory of Trau, and Nona was almost conquered by the Ottomans in 1500. The war of 1537–40 brought more hardships and losses to the rural areas of Venice's Adriatic possessions, particularly on Corfu. Khair-a-Din Barbarossa was also able to put to fire and sword some 80 villages in Crete and enslave many young men.²⁸⁵ During the Cyprus War many attacks, skirmishes, and clashes occurred in and around Zara, Sebenico, Trau, Spalato, and Cattaro. The Ottomans also landed on Curzola and Lesina, causing great damage to these islands and their inhabitants. Although these wars ended with no territorial changes on this front, according to Praga (who published his book in the 1950s), the years between 1540 and 1570 were the cruelest in modern Dalmatian history. Many survivors of these raids and attacks fled to the fortified coastal towns and to the islands, and also to Italy.²⁸⁶

The small islands in the Aegean and the Ionian Sea were often exposed to raids. In 1537, most of the inhabitants of Paxo are said to have been enslaved.²⁸⁷ The Venetian subjects of Cerigo suffered a similar fate in the same year,²⁸⁸ whereas those of Amorgos, who were attacked by Barbarossa in 1538, succeeded in escaping to Crete.²⁸⁹ Yet a few examples indicate that even relatively small islands could withstand attacks by big Ottoman fleets. Thus, the island of Limnos, situated right in front of the entry to the Dardanelles, was occupied by Venice in 1464 and resisted repeated Ottoman attacks throughout the rest of the war. It was only surrendered to the Ottomans as part of the peace agreement of 1479. The smaller island of Skyros was attacked by the big Ottoman fleet that was on its way to conquer Negroponte in 1470, but it successfully resisted this attack and remained 70 more years under Venetian rule.²⁹⁰ Tinos with-

²⁸⁵ Ernle Bradford, *The Sultan's Admiral. The Life of Barbarossa* (New York, 1968), p. 160.

²⁸⁶ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, pp. 162–63, 165, 173; Carter, "Settlement and Population," pp. 11–12.

²⁸⁷ Bradford, *The Sultan's Admiral*, p. 152.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 160–61.

²⁸⁹ Slot, *Archipelagus*, p. 32.

²⁹⁰ Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 2:300–01.

stood repeated Ottoman raids and attempts to take the island during the 16th and 17th centuries.²⁹¹

Pirates and Corsairs

Raids on coasts, towns, and villages, pillages across the frontier, and piratical activities at sea were a constant plague in the early modern Mediterranean. The inner sea was the hunting zone for several piratical organizations: the Order of St. John of Rhodes (later of Malta); the Order of Saint Stephen; Ottoman corsairs from Almissa (Omiš), Valona, Dulcigno (Ulcinj), and Obrovazzo (Obrovac) from the 15th century onward;²⁹² and corsairs from Algiers and Tunis between the 16th and the 18th centuries.

The Venetian conquest of Almissa in 1444 liberated the nearby islands from constant raids originating from this piratical nest, enabling their demographic and economic resurgence.²⁹³ In the following century, the outstanding piratical threat to life in the northern and central Adriatic were the Uskoks, military colonists who were settled by Emperor Ferdinand I in the small port town of Segna (Senj) in the Quarnaro Gulf after being evacuated from the Dalmatian enclave in which they had served as border fighters against the Ottomans. During the late 16th century they engaged in piracy, with Habsburg support, and became extremely harmful to Venetian shipping, with occasional incursions against Istrian port towns, particularly between the 1580s and the 1610s. Uskok attacks on Ottoman ships also risked disturbing the delicate relationship between Venice and the Ottomans. The Republic reacted with reprisals against Trieste, Fiume, and Laurana. These clashes finally led to an open war in 1615. The peace of Madrid (ratified in 1618) did not bring any territorial changes, but the cause of the war—the Uskoks—was removed from Segna.²⁹⁴

In the twilight of Venice's existence as an independent state, its navy conducted an operation against Algerian and Tunisian bases of marauders who had caused great damage to Venetian territories in the southern Adriatic. On his return to Venice after concluding in 1789 an agreement

²⁹¹ Slot, *Archipelagus*, pp. 75, 93, 394 n. 20 (1538–39, 1570, 1652, 1654, 1658, 1661); Pietro Garzoni, *Istoria della Repubblica di Venezia in tempo della Sacra Lega contro Maometto IV e tre suoi successori gran sultani de' turchi. Parte prima*, 4th ed. (Venice, 1720), p. 75 (1684).

²⁹² Carter, "Settlement and Population," pp. 9, 24; Maria Pia Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente* (Bologna, 2010), p. 235.

²⁹³ Carter, "Settlement and Population," pp. 9, 24.

²⁹⁴ Rothenberg, "Venice and the Uskoks"; Bracewell, *The Uskoks*; Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, 23–24.

that was supposed to put an end to the piratical activities of the Tunisian pirates, Angelo Emo, the commander of the Venetian fleet, was awarded in Zante a golden sword and a medal coined in his honor.²⁹⁵

Venice's Defensive Forces in the stato da mar

Venice's most acute defense problems, especially on the Ottoman front, were the lack of manpower, the cost of employing a large army of salaried soldiers, and the time needed to reach the overseas territories. The Venetian standing army was mostly comprised of Italian soldiers and commanders, with some reinforcements of non-Italian mercenaries, overseen by civil commissioners (*provveditori*).²⁹⁶ Military garrisons were stationed in all towns and fortresses, but when a war broke out, the main fighting force had to be brought from outside. For example, there were about 2500 salaried soldiers stationed in the Dalmatian colonies, but in times of war their number rose to 10,000.²⁹⁷ In the last two wars with the Ottomans, a greater number of non-Italian soldiers and officers was employed.

It has been estimated that around the middle of the 16th century, the military forces of the Venetian Republic, on land and sea, numbered about 11,000–13,000 men in active service and 30,000–35,000 who could be enrolled in case of emergency, not including the militias of the *stato da mar*. During the war of Cyprus there were more than 30,000 soldiers (*fanti*) in Venice's overseas possessions and navy, out of a total of 55,000 fighting men. Lucio Pezzolo estimates the number of militiamen in the overseas territories in the period following the Cyprus war at around 10,000 men, out of a comprehensive number of 35,000 militiamen, whose number continued to rise during the 17th century.²⁹⁸

Like in the rest of Europe, feudal forces occupied an increasingly marginal role in Venice's military organization. Where the feudal system existed, as it did in Crete, in the Aegean, in Cyprus, and in the Ionian Islands, holders of feudal estates were required to show up in periodical

²⁹⁵ Romanin, *Storia documentata*, 8:190–96.

²⁹⁶ Michael Mallett, "Part I: c.1400 to 1408," in Michael E. Mallett and John R. Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State: Venice c.100–1617* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 168–76; Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," in Mallett and Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State*, pp. 277–79, 315–17.

²⁹⁷ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 172.

²⁹⁸ Luciano Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza nella Repubblica di Venezia fra medioevo e prima età moderna," in Rossella Cancila, ed., *Mediterraneo in armi (secc. XV–XVIII)*, 2 vols (Palermo, 2007), 1:67–112 [*Quaderni-Mediterranea. Ricerche Storiche*, 4/1–2], pp. 92–93.

musters (*mostre*) with their horses, squires, and foot soldiers, whose numbers corresponded in principle to the importance of their respective fiefs.²⁹⁹ In Cyprus, Crete, and probably also elsewhere, the feudal service could be substituted with the payment of scutage (*defatto di servizio, disvarnitio*), according to a pre-established tariff.³⁰⁰ In 16th-century Cyprus the feudal levy was somewhat enlarged by a new institution—the *Provvisionati a cavallo*—comprising descendants of noble families who did not inherit a feudal estate. They received a yearly money-fief and were required to serve as cavalrymen.³⁰¹ But on the whole, Venice could not and did not rely on the feudal system for the defense of its overseas dominions.

A group peculiar to the Venetian defense system were the so-called *stradioti*, who were light cavalrymen, mostly of Greek or Albanian descent but sometimes also Dalmatians (*Crovati*). They were first employed in the Balkans and, from the late 15th century onward, also in other areas. In peacetime, their primary task was the protection of Venetian territories against piratical raids, but they were later also integrated into the Venetian armies in Italy. Their overall number never seems to have exceeded about 2000–2500 fighters, but small contingents of *stradioti* could be found in all Venetian colonies.³⁰² There were actually two kinds of *stradioti*: salaried ones, who could be easily moved from one territory to another; and those who received lands and became part of local societies in the colonies. The latter form was instituted following the loss of Napoli di Romania and Malvasia, whose able-bodied refugees received lands on Cyprus, Crete, and the Ionian Islands in return for service as light cavalrymen.³⁰³

²⁹⁹ Jacoby, *La féodalité*, p. 328 (order to perform such a muster three times yearly on Tinos and Mykonos, 1447); Gilles Grivaud and Aspasia Papadaki, "L'institution de la *Mostra Generale* de la cavalerie féodale en Crète et en Chypre vénitiennes durant le XVI^e siècle," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 12 (1986), pp. 165–99 (Crete and Cyprus).

³⁰⁰ Arbel, "Κύπρος," p. 475; Grivaud and Papadaki, "L'institution de la *Mostra Generale*," pp. 181–82; Evangelia Skoufari, *Cipro veneziana (1473–1571). Istituzioni e culture nel Regno della Serenissima* (Rome, 2011), p. 93 n. 109.

³⁰¹ Arbel, "Η Κύπρος," pp. 476–77.

³⁰² Mallett, "Part I: c.1400–1508," p. 73; Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," pp. 376–78, 447–51; Paolo Petta, *Stradioti. Soldati albanesi in Italia, sec. XV–XIX* (Lecce, 1996); Giorgio I. Pilidis, "Morire per honor di la Signoria: Gli stradioti greci a Venezia," *Demosia Ilaria: Pubblica celebrazione: 500 anni dalla fondazione della comunità dei Greci Ortodossi di Venezia, 1498–1998* (Venice, 1999), pp. 25–46; For a collection of sources concerning the *stradioti*, see Sathas, *Documents inédits*, vols 7–9 (1888–90).

³⁰³ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," pp. 447–52; Benjamin Arbel, "Cypriot Population under Venetian Rule: A Demographic Study," *Μελέται και Υπομνήματα* 1 (1984), p. 187, repr. in Arbel, *Cyprus*, article no. V.

In all important towns, which were normally defended by strong walls and canons, there were also artillerymen, who usually served for longer periods than the regular soldiers and, unlike the latter, were sometimes regarded as a sort of urban militia, organized in the so-called *scuole di bombardieri*.³⁰⁴

Since professional soldiers were rather expensive to maintain, Venice embarked from the 1520s onward on a systematic organization of civil militias (*cernide, ordinanze*), mostly peasant militias, in its overseas territories, on the model of a similar organization that had already been established in the Venetian *terraferma*.³⁰⁵ The militiamen were allowed to keep arms and enjoyed privileges that included exemption from personal dues and from forced labor in public works.³⁰⁶ They were organized in companies of 300 to 600 men, each company commanded by a salaried captain sent from Venice, and the men were required to participate in periodical training camps.³⁰⁷ What John Hale describes as Venice's "new, post-colonial mood of co-operation with its maritime subjects"³⁰⁸ seems indeed to be a manifestation of trust in the inhabitants of the Republic's overseas territories. Luciano Pezzolo calls these militiamen "privileged subjects," suggesting that this system contributed to the creation of a consensus between them and the central government. However, at the same time it also created tensions among the *Dominante's* subjects, since the exemptions enjoyed by the militiamen, as well as the payments which they received when under arms, had to be covered by the other members of their communities.³⁰⁹ In any case, in view of the huge imbalance between its own human resources and those of the Ottoman Empire, Venice had no other possibility but to opt for trusting its overseas subjects.

The Venetian organization of defense also included a system of coast guards, manned, day and night, by peasants as one of their routine obligations. Watch towers were built along the coasts for this purpose. The

³⁰⁴ Mallett, "Part I: c.1400 to 1508," pp. 85–86; Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," pp. 404–08; Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," pp. 181 (Cattaro, 1594), 183 (Zara 1602, Spalato 1605–06, Sebenico 1620); Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza," p. 99.

³⁰⁵ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," pp. 350–66, 456–59; Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza," pp. 93–94; Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 39; Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," pp. 456–59; Despina Vlassi, "Cefalonia alla fine del Settecento. L'ultima *anagrafi* veneziana," in Maltezou, Tzavara, and Vlassi, eds., *I Greci durante La venetocrazia*, p. 458; Pederin, "Die venezianische Verwaltung... (XVI–XVIII Jh.)," pp. 185, 194, 196.

³⁰⁶ Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza," p. 82.

³⁰⁷ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," p. 458; Slot, *Archipelagus*, p. 56.

³⁰⁸ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," p. 458.

³⁰⁹ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," p. 458; Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza," pp. 93–94.

coast guards transmitted signals by means of fire, smoke, and mortars. This is how guards located on the small island of Paxo (Paxi) could inform the governors of Corfu about maritime movements in the area. In case of alarm, mounted soldiers hurried to the place to meet the raiders.³¹⁰ This system of coast guards and mounted *stradioti* was completed by small squadrons of war galleys, the so-called galleys of the guard (*galee di guardia*), which were stationed in the overseas colonies and could participate in their defense against pirates and corsairs, protect maritime transportation in the vicinity of the territory concerned, and act against contraband.³¹¹

The Dialogue Between Ship and Shore: Fortifications and the Navy

The Venetian answer to two of the main problems of defense of its overseas territories—lack of sufficient manpower and great distance—was a combination of two components: fortified compounds that were meant to offer shelter for the defenders until help from the outside could reach the territory under attack; and the navy, which could transport reinforcements and supplies to the fortresses under siege. This was part of that “dialogue between ship and shore” characterized by John Hale.³¹² These were also the domains in which the greatest material resources were invested.

Fortifications

Venice’s strategy of defense of its overseas territories was based on fortified cities and a system of forts, provided with victuals and ammunitions that were meant to enable resistance of long sieges (up to two years) until reinforcement arrived by sea.³¹³ Until the early 16th century, most works in this field were restricted to repairs and maintenance of old medieval fortifications. But the changes in military technology, especially the more effective use of artillery, necessitated a renewal of the systems of defense.

³¹⁰ Jacoby, *La féodalité*, p. 329 (Tinos and Mykonos); Slot, *Archipelagus*, pp. 55–56; Arbel, “Ἡ Κύπρος,” p. 478.

³¹¹ Alberto Tenenti, *Cristoforo Da Canal. La marine vénitienne avant Lépante* (Paris, 1962), pp. 129–30; Guglielmo Zanelli, “La piazzaforte di Zara nei secoli XVI–XVIII,” in Michela Dal Borgo and Guglielmo Zanelli, *Zara: una fortezza, un porto, un arsenale (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Rome, 2008), p. 39; Renzo Paci, *La ‘Scala’ di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra Cinque e Seicento* (Venice, 1971), p. 117n. For anti-contraband activities, see Oliver Jens Schmitt, “‘Contrabannum’—Der adriatisch-balkanische Schmuggel im ausgehenden Mittelalter,” *Südost Forschungen* 67 (2008), 1–26.

³¹² Hale, “Part II: 1509–1617,” p. 429.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

During the 16th century, several military engineers were sent on tours of inspection and returned with recommendations for the fortification of urban centers, nearly all of them port towns.³¹⁴ Although specific projects were prepared and confirmed and their financing also planned, the works often dragged on for many years and consumed a considerable amount of money.

From 1542, all these activities were under the supervision of a new magistracy, the *Provveditori alle fortezze*.³¹⁵ The second half of the 16th century was a particularly intensive period in this field. The city walls of Zara, the fort of San Nicolò at Sebenico, the arsenal at Lesina, as well as various compounds at Trau, Spalato, Cattaro, Nadin, Novegradi, and their surroundings were refortified according to the new techniques of Renaissance military architecture.³¹⁶ In Crete, starting from the 1540s, the three main port towns on the northern coast, Candia, La Canea, and Rettimo, received special attention.³¹⁷ They were all refortified according to projects prepared by leading military engineers. In Rettimo, whose fortifications were ruined in an Ottoman attack during the war of Cyprus, a new fortress was built on the hill overlooking the town, further separating, on the one hand, the Venetian *reggimento*, the Latin bishop and his Cathedral, as well as the Venetian garrison, who were well protected within its walls (not well enough, as they learned in 1646) and, on the other, the local inhabitants of Rettimo, who had to content themselves with the less imposing walls of the town itself. Between 1574 and 1587, 51,454 ducats were spent on this project. During the 16th century the Venetians also built three island fortresses along the northern shores of Crete, for the protection of navigation along the colony's coasts. These fortresses—Grabusa, Spinalunga, and Suda—were the only parts of Crete which remained in Venice's possession after the surrender of the colony to the Ottomans in 1669.³¹⁸ A fortress built in Sitia, the easternmost town on the northern coast, was apparently destroyed by the Venetians themselves as a defensive measure right after the Ottoman invasion.

³¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 431–34.

³¹⁵ Hale, "The First Fifty Years of a Venetian Magistracy: The *Provveditori alle Fortezze*," in Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, eds., *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron* (Florence, 1971), pp. 499–530.

³¹⁶ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 164; Zanelli, "La piazzaforte di Zara."

³¹⁷ What follows is mainly based on Ioanna Steriotou, "Le fortezze del Regno di Candia. L'organizzazione, i progetti, la costruzione," in Gherardo Ortalli, ed., *Venezia e Creta* (Venice, 1998), pp. 283–302.

³¹⁸ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," p. 445.

On Cyprus, during most of the century of Venetian rule, the Republic focused its defensive efforts on Famagusta, whose old walls were continuously repaired and rebuilt throughout the Venetian period. With its protected harbour, Famagusta offered the possibility to withstand a long siege, as it really did in 1570–71. Cerines (Kerynia), on the island's northern coast, was also refortified between 1504 and 1529. Finally, shortly before the Ottoman invasion of 1570, Venice decided to build new defensive walls around the colony's capital, Nicosia. This project involved the destruction of entire town quarters, whose inhabitants, although compensated to some extent for their losses, suffered greatly under these circumstances (and even more so during the Ottoman conquest that followed suite).³¹⁹

During the second half of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th, the Ionian islands also saw big fortification projects. The so-called old fortress of Corfu was rebuilt, and an entirely new fortress was added later on the northeastern part of this town. The project lasted several decades, the programs were revised several times, and great resources were invested in both fortresses. In this case too, whole quarters had to be evacuated, and the town assumed an entirely new layout. Finally, the town itself (*i borghi*), which had previously been totally undefended, was also encircled by walls. The fortress of Zante, overlooking the *borgo*, underwent similar rebuilding. In Cephalonia, a new fortress was built as from 1586 at Asso (Assos), on the western coast of the island, overlooking a protected, natural port. However, Venetian efforts to attract settlers to this new, fortified compound, were not very successful.³²⁰

The conquest of the Morea and its establishment as Venice's new *Regno* brought a new series of fortification projects. The imposing fortress of

³¹⁹ Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 3:844–64; Giovanni Perbellini, “Le fortificazioni di Cipro dal X al XIV secolo,” *Castellum* 17 (1973), 7–58; Antonio Manno, “Politica e architettura militare: le difese di Venezia (1557–1573),” *Studi veneziani* n.s. 11 (1986), 91–137; Grivaud, “Aux confins de l'empire”; Gilles Grivaud, “Nicosie remodelée (1567): contribution à la topographie de la ville médiévale,” *Επετηρίς του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών* 19 (1992), 281–306; Walter Panciera, “Défendre Chypre. La construction et la reddition de la forteresse de Nicosie (1567–1570),” in Anne Brogini and Maria Ghazali, eds., *Des marges aux frontières. Les puissances et les îles en Méditerranée à l'époque moderne* (Paris, 2010), pp. 81–101.

³²⁰ Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, pp. 85–97; Hale, “Parts II: 1509–1617,” p. 446; Nicolaos G. Moschonas, “Ἐκθεση του αντιπροβλεπτή Ἄσου Αμβρόσιου Corner (1597),” in *Μνημόσυνον Σοφίας Αιωνιάδη* (Venice, 1974), pp. 247–60; Ennio Concina, “Città e fortezze nelle ‘Tre Isole Nostre del Levante,’” in *Venezia e la difesa del Levante. Da Lepanto a Candia (1570–1670)* (Venice, 1986), pp. 185–220; Ζοί Α. Μυλωνα, *Το καστρο της Ζακύνθου* (Athens, 2003).

Palamidi, which was intended to protect Napoli di Romania, the capital of the newly conquered *Regno di Morea*, was built in 1711–13.³²¹

Fortification works involved great efforts on the part of the colonial subjects, not only in the fiscal sphere but also in actual physical involvement, since all able-bodied peasants and part of the urban population had to contribute a pre-established number of working days on the fortifications (or pay a tax instead).³²² Istria was an exception in this sphere, because in the lack of any serious Ottoman menace in this region, no major works of fortification were carried out there.

Fortification was very costly and could only partly be covered by local resources of the colonies. On several occasions it was under pressure on the part of local elites that the Republic embarked on such projects, initiatives that were sometimes accompanied by a disposition to contribute considerable resources of their own. This was the case in Cyprus in the 1560s. The names of Nicosia's bastions still bear the names of the 16th-century contributors. Yet new fortifications were not always a sufficiently good defense, as demonstrated in the case of Nicosia, as well as in that of the Palamidi fortress at Nauplion, captured, most probably by treason, in 1715, shortly after its completion. The big fortification projects proved to be effective only in Venice's Adriatic and Ionian colonies—twice in Corfu (in 1537 and in 1716), and several times in various Dalmatian towns. Cerigo's castle may have also been effective in providing shelter to local inhabitants and Venetian defenders.

However, during peacetime, the result of these works was often an increased separation between the rulers, who generally resided in the fortified compound, and the ruled, who often had to content themselves with the unfortified or only partly fortified *borghi*. This separation was all the more marked in those places, such as Malvasia, Napoli di Romania, Zante, and the new fortress in Corfu, which were built high above the town that they were meant to protect. This separation became a matter of life and death when the enemy invaded the colony. In such moments, most of the inhabitants of these towns were unable to find shelter in the fortress, or were even prevented from doing so, and consequently had little chance of resisting foreign invasions or fleeing from their disastrous

³²¹ Timothy E. Gregory, *Nauplion* (Athens, 1980), pp. 12–14, 67–71; Dionysios Hatzopoulos, *La dernière guerre entre la République de Venise et l'Empire ottoman, 1714–1718* (Montreal, 1999), p. 17.

³²² Arbel, "Cypriot Population," pp. 209–10; Yotopolou-Sisilianou, ed., *Πρεσβείες*, p. 293; Pagratis, ed., *Οι εκθέσεις*, p. 229.

effects. For example, during the Ottoman invasion of Corfu in 1537, women, children, and old people, the so-called *inutili* (useless, ineffective), were refused admission into the fortress for lack of space and victuals, which were reserved for the castle's defenders. Consequently, they were either killed or taken into slavery in great numbers, a trauma that created anger and frustration among Venice's Corfiot subjects and also doubts as to the Republic's ability to protect them against similar future attacks.³²³

Peasants were expected to flee into the urban centers that were ready to receive them (especially if they were able-bodied), to enlist as rowers in the galleys, or find refuge in the mountains. On the vulnerable coasts of Dalmatia a whole system of fortifications was designed to offer shelter to the inhabitants and their livestock against raids and plundering. It included castles, fortified houses, redoubts, and perimeter defenses built in proximity to inhabited areas.³²⁴ On the islands, a few old castles were maintained to offer shelter to the inhabitants of the countryside and their livestock in case of emergency. The old Castle of Sant' Angelo in the mountains of northwestern Corfu was occasionally repaired for this purpose,³²⁵ and the old fortresses on the mountain range of northern Cyprus were expected to fulfill a similar function.³²⁶ In any case, such arrangements were hardly able to prevent big invading armies from making havoc of these areas.

The Navy

The size of the navy in peacetime was fixed in 1523 at 25 galleys, but it generally comprised no more than 24, of which 18 were commissioned in Venice and 6 in Crete and Cyprus. Cyprus had a small squadron of 2–4 galleys to protect its coasts and the commercial shipping, and a few other colonies, such as Cerigo and Zante, also had one or two galleys "of the guard," as they were called.³²⁷ By the end of the 16th century the peacetime navy already numbered 33 galleys, four of which were manned in Crete. This navy was comprised of several squadrons: two galleys, headed by the *Capitano contra Uscocchi*, operated in the northern Adriatic

³²³ Karapidakis, *Civis fidelis*, pp. 61–62.

³²⁴ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, pp. 163–64.

³²⁵ See the index in Pagratis, ed., *Oi εκθέρσεις*, under "Castello Sant'Angelo."

³²⁶ Benjamin Arbel, "Entre mythe et histoire: la légende noire de la domination vénitienne à Chypre," *Etudes balkaniques. Cahiers Pierre Belon* 5 (1998), 95–96 and n. 41. repr. in Arbel, *Cyprus*, article no. XIV.

³²⁷ Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," p. 966.

until the removal of the Uskok corsairs from Segna (Senj) in 1618; several other galleys, including the *galee di condannati* (with their own *capitano*), patrolled the central Adriatic; 7 to 12 galleys, based at Corfu, defended the area around the Ionian Islands, under the command of the *Capitano del Golfo*; and up to eight galleys had the task of defending the area around Crete and Cerigo. Corfu also served as the headquarters of the *Provveditore Generale dell'Armata*, the chief commander of the navy in peacetime. A reserve fleet, comprising 50 ship hulls, whose number was raised to 100 in 1545, was kept in the Venetian Arsenal, to be commissioned in wartime.³²⁸ During the war of the 1530s the navy comprised 100 light galleys (*galee sottili*) and 12 big ones (*galee grosse*), whereas during the Cyprus war, the navy numbered 130 light galleys and nine galleasses. In later centuries, for example, during the War of Morea, the navy was smaller, and it relied less on light galleys and more on big galleasses (*galeazze, navi di linea*), which by then had developed into more effective war machines.³²⁹

Every trireme needed at least 160 rowers and every galleass about 300 of them. Other seamen, of course, were also necessary to operate these ships. Consequently, to man a navy of the size that Venice kept during the Cyprus War, about 30,000 rowers and other seamen were necessary. In order to recruit them, Venice depended on four, and later five, human reservoirs: Venice and its immediate surrounding (*the Dogado*); the overseas empire; the *terraferma*; voluntary recruits originating from various parts, not necessarily Venetian territories; and, from 1540 onward, criminals (*condannati*) condemned to row in the navy in a separate squadron. When the prospects of war seemed real enough, a *Capitano Generale da Mar* was elected as commander in chief and the reserve fleet and conscripts (the *zontaroli*) were put to sea.³³⁰ When in office, in many respects the *Capitano Generale da Mar* was also considered as a supreme governor of the *Dominante's* overseas territories.

By the late 15th century, Dalmatians, Albanians (or Montenegrins), and Greeks constituted the majority of the navy's crews. According to Alberto Tenenti, before the Cyprus War the greater part of the fleet crews was still composed of salaried crew members who joined the navy out of their own free will (*volontari, buonavoglia*), mostly Greeks and Dalmatians. Yet when

³²⁸ Maurice Aymard, in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 12 (1991): *Il mare*, ed Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, p. 439.

³²⁹ Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza," p. 74.

³³⁰ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," pp. 444–45; Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza," p. 74. During wartime, the *Provveditore dell'armata* became second-in-command.

a big military conflict broke out, as during the war of the 1530s, and even more so during the war of Cyprus (1570–71), it became necessary to reinforce the fleet with coerced conscripts from the reserve forces (*ordinanza da mar*).³³¹ In the battle of Lepanto (1571) were involved seven Dalmatian galleys (from Zara, Veglia, Arbe, Cherso, Sebenico, Trau, and Lesina), four Corfiot galleys, at least one Cypriot galley, and an “Albanian” one (from Cattaro). But the number of colonial rowers and seamen who served in the navy in this battle was higher than those recruited specifically to man galleys commissioned in the respective colonies. Thus, about 7000 Cretans, who served as rowers in 30 to 40 galleys, and about 1500 Corfiots, who must have occupied about 7 to 8 galleys, are reported to have participated in this battle.³³² Briefly, the navy, whose principal task was to defend the *stato da mar*, was also manned predominantly by rowers and seamen originating from the overseas territories.³³³

However, serving in the *ordinanza da mar* as a galley rower was one of the most detested obligations among Venice's colonial subjects, and they tried to avoid it in all possible manners, including becoming priests, which freed them from this burdensome obligation. Under such circumstances, the burden was largely borne by poor peasants who could not afford to buy an exemption from this service.³³⁴ For obvious reasons, among the peasants of the *terraferma*, who were also required to serve, it was no less difficult to overcome similar resistance, despite various privileges that were granted to galley rowers.³³⁵

The daily care of the fleet units stationed in various colonies fell upon the colonies themselves. Some ports, such as Famagusta and Candia, served as critical supply and maintenance centers for the fleet, where many tons of rusks were produced for the seamen's diet, an obligation that risked having repercussions on local food supply.³³⁶ Several colonial

³³¹ Tenenti, *Cristoforo da Canal*, pp. 68, 131; Pezzolo, “Stato, guerra e finanza,” pp. 73–74, 84, 87.

³³² Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 174; Miller, “The Ionian Islands,” p. 230; Pezzolo, “Stato, guerra e finanza,” pp. 77, 84, 92.

³³³ Tenenti, *Cristoforo da Canal*, pp. 121, 129; Pezzolo, “Stato, guerra e finanza,” 84.

³³⁴ E.g., Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, 138; Yotopoulou-Sisilianou, ed., *Πρεσβείες*, 75–8; Tsiknakis, *Οι εκθέσεις*, 193.

³³⁵ Tenenti, *Cristoforo da Canal*, pp. 65–68; Aymard, “La leva marittima,” pp. 442–48; Pezzolo, “Stato, guerra e finanza,” pp. 82–83.

³³⁶ E.g., Aikaterinis Ch. Aristidou, *Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα της κυπριακής ιστορίας από το αρχείο της Βενετίας*, 4 vols (Nicosia, 1990–2003), 4:113–14, 245–46; Ioannis G. Yannopoulos, *Η Κρήτη κατά τον τέταρτο βενετοτουρκικό πόλεμο (1570–1571)* (Athens, 1978), pp. 71, 116; Spanakis, ed., *Μνημεία*, 4:158; Pagratis, ed., *Οι εκθέσεις*, 3:07, 396–97.

ports, including Famagusta, Candia, La Canea, Corfu, Lesina, and Zara, had arsenals which provided professional maintenance facilities and services to the military galleys. In some of them, ship hulls (*arisili*) were kept as a reserve fleet that could be commissioned locally within a short time—in the late 16th century, up to 30 galleys could be added to the fleet in this way. Finally, they could also be used as shipyards to build new galleys.³³⁷

IX. *Internal Conflict Management*

Manifestations of injustice, oppression, and abuse of power were abundant, but while Venetian magistrates were occasionally involved in phenomena of this kind, the principal protagonists in this sphere generally belonged to the local elites. Consequently, disorder and resistance was in most cases either an expression of a power struggle between local potentates or, more rarely, attempts by the weak and exploited to liberate themselves from exploitation by other members of the local society. Such were the cases of the disturbances in Dalmatia that took place between 1510 and 1514, particularly on the island of Lesina (Hvar),³³⁸ of the so-called “Revolt of the Commoners” that broke out in Zante in May 1628,³³⁹ of the violent events that took place in Corfu in 1640 and in 1652 and once again in 1748,³⁴⁰ of those that occurred in Cephalonia between 1748 and the early 1750s and again in 1770,³⁴¹ as well as of the peasant rebellions that took place in

³³⁷ Tenenti, *Cristoforo da Canal*, p. 120. Ennio Concina, “‘Sostener in vigore le cose del mare’: arsenali, vascelli, cannoni,” in *Venezia e la difesa del Levante. Da Lepanto a Candia (1570–1670)* (Venice, 1986), pp. 50–53; Aymard, “La leva marittima,” p. 456; Franco Rossi, “Arsenali veneziani in Levante: un rinnovamento strategico?” in Martino Ferrari Bravo and Stefano Tosato, eds., *Gli arsenali oltremarini della Serenissima. Approvvigionamenti e strutture cantieristiche per la flotta veneziana (secoli XVI–XVII)* (Milan, 2010), pp. 161–90; Martino Ferrari Bravo, “Il potenziamento degli arsenali navali di Creta negli anni ottanta del Cinquecento,” in Ferrari Bravo and Tosato, eds., *Gli arsenali oltremarini della Serenissima*, pp. 201–16.

³³⁸ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, pp. 166–68; O’Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 144–49.

³³⁹ Dimitris Arvanitakis, *Κοινωνικές αντιθέσεις στην πόλη της Ζακύνθου. Το ρεμπελιό των ποπολάρων* (1628) (Athens, 2001), pp. 161–200.

³⁴⁰ Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, pp. 151–54; Dimitris Arvanitakis, “Οι ταραχές του 1640 στην Κέρκυρα (παρατηρήσεις για την προβληματική τής εξέγερσης),” in *ΣΤ’ Διεθνές Πανιώνιο Συνέδριο, Ζάκυνθος, 23–27 Σεπτεμβρίου 1997. Πρακτικά*, 2 vols (Athens, 2001), 2:225–41; Elly Yotopoulou-Sisilianou, “Alcune considerazioni sulle classi sociali corfiofte e sulla politica veneta nei loro confronti in base a quanto risulta dalle fonti e in modo particolare dai testi delle ambasciate,” in Massimo Costantini & Alikì Nikiforou, eds., *Levante veneziano. Aspetti di storia delle Isole Ionie al tempo della Serenissima* (Rome, 1996), pp. 110–21; Yotopoulou-Sisilianou, ed., *Πρεσβείες*, pp. 82–88.

³⁴¹ Pignatorre, *Memorie storiche*, 1:178–79, 181–82, 185–90.

Dalmatia in 1738–40.³⁴² The Venetian authorities were conscious of the social injustice in their colonies, as witnessed in so many reports written by Venetian governors, but they did not intervene to stop it unless it was absolutely necessary for the stability of Venice's rule. The maintenance of the traditional social system, with only marginal improvement and amelioration, never on a grand scale, was the Republic's general policy.

Venice adopted what may be described as a typical colonial attitude: it was much more concerned with fairness and justice at home (and even there, only up to a certain degree) than in its overseas colonies, where, with the passage of time, the Republic increasingly allowed the local elites to manage local affairs. The few manifestations of resistance that could be clearly considered as anti-Venetian were actually three: two plots (not real revolts) organized in Crete in the years following the definitive demise of Byzantium,³⁴³ and one (again, not a revolt) organized in Cyprus in 1563 by Diassorinos.³⁴⁴ Interestingly, in all three cases the prime protagonists, or at least some of them, came from outside—Byzantine refugees in the Cretan cases and Diassorinos in the Cypriot one. And in all three cases, Orthodox priests were also involved. No less significant is the facility with which these plots were discovered (with the help of local informers) and suppressed, especially compared with the difficulties encountered by Venice in suppressing earlier and later revolts (real ones) on Crete and also with the more massive and drastic reactions on Venice's part in response to internal conflicts in other colonies.

An excellent example of the intricate mixture of factors related to overseas manifestations of violence is the rebellion that broke out in La Canea's province in Crete in the years 1523–28. As elucidated by Anastasia Papadia-Lala's study of these events, their background and repercussions, the roots of this turmoil can already be observed in the mountainous areas of western Crete from the first decade of the 16th century onward, and

³⁴² Berengo, "Problemi economico-sociali," pp. 477–81, 503–04, 509; Paladini, 'Un caos che spaventa,' pp. 315–27; Paladini, "Paterni tiranni," pp. 209–10.

³⁴³ Manoussos I. Manoussakas, *Η εν Κρήτη συνωμοσία του Σήφη Βλαστού (1453–1454) και η νέα συνωμοτική κίνησις του 1460–1462* (Athens, 1960), pp. 22–156; See the summary in O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 104–07; Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne*, pp. 432–33.

³⁴⁴ Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 3:837–41; Benjamin Arbel, "Cyprus on the Eve of the Ottoman Conquest," in Michalis N. Michael, Matthias Kappler, and Eftihios Gavriel, eds., *Ottoman Cyprus* (Wiesbaden, 2009), p. 47. Diassorinos is sometimes considered a precursor of Greek Enlightenment and a fighter for national Greek independence; even if we accept this view, such an ambition had no prospect of realization. See Theodoros Papadopoulos, "Ιάκωβος Διασσορινός," in Theodore Papadopoulos, ed., *Ιστορία της Κύπρου* vol. 4/A (Nicosia, 1995), pp. 537–42.

they would become a chronic problem for Venice right to the eve of the Cretan war.³⁴⁵ It would be impossible to follow these developments here in detail, but it is important to emphasize the complexity of the social, political, cultural, and even geographic factors that must be considered in this case. The recurrent unrest was confined to the mountainous areas of western Crete, particularly to Sfakia, a region known for its hardy and ungovernable inhabitants and its rough mountains, where, according to the report of *Capitano Generale* of Crete, Girolamo Corner, no public magistrate had dared to come for 15 years.³⁴⁶ As it appears from the Venetian documentation, a great number of the people involved in this turmoil were outlaws who found refuge in those inaccessible mountains and lived chiefly on robbery. Thus, a coalition of frustrated and over-exploited peasants, hundreds of outlaws, and several powerful clan leaders demonstrated, though at a high price, the limits of Venetian authority in one of its premier colonial possessions. Significantly, the actual military confrontation involved the fighting of Cretan peasants on both sides, and there were also Cretans who supported the actions of the authorities and even demanded Venetian intervention against what they described as robbers.³⁴⁷ However, even the very harsh measures taken against the rebels, including large-scale executions and banishments, were not very effective.³⁴⁸ But despite the numerous phenomena of misadministration in Crete, and notwithstanding the animosity to Venice that must have existed at least in some sectors of Cretan society, it would be difficult to consider these recurrent phenomena of disobedience and unrest as a Cretan rebellion aimed at ending Venetian rule.

In dealing with disturbances, a variety of measures were open to the authorities, and the result often depended on the particular circumstances, both local and international, and also on the choice of magistrates who were required to deal with the challenge. A criminal trial was the easiest way, often without the culprits even present—which explains the great number of outlaws in Venetian territories and even in the Venetian fleet. A military expedition had to be approved by the central authorities, normally the Council of Ten and later the state inquisitors, who specified the level of action allowed to the commander of the operation. Such expeditions, especially in the larger colonies, such as Crete and Cyprus,

³⁴⁵ Papadia-Lala, *Αποτικές Ταραχές*. See also O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 149–58.

³⁴⁶ Sanudo, *I diarii*, 46:425, 427.

³⁴⁷ Spanakis, ed., *Μνημεία*, 4:143 (*relazione* of Filippo Pasqualigo, 1594).

³⁴⁸ Papadia-Lala, *Αποτικές Ταραχές*, pp. 156–61.

could be based on forces available in the colonies themselves, sometimes using local militias, as in the case of the violent events in western Crete in 1523–28.³⁴⁹ In smaller colonies, such as Lesina, military intervention had to come from outside, through the Venetian navy. In such cases commanders had the authority to execute or banish rebels and confiscate their property. But as shown by Monique O'Connell, such measures could also be overturned through the procedure of appeal to Venice, which sometimes creates the impression that Venetian repressive actions, even the most drastic ones, were never conclusive.³⁵⁰

In dealing with social conflicts in its overseas dominions, the patrician Republic could not afford to act in disharmony with the foundations of the Venetian aristocratic regime. On the one hand it consented to the development of corporative bodies representing the popular strata of society, as it did in Nicosia or in Dalmatia. It also tried to act as an objective arbitrator in conflicts between the nobility or other privileged groups and new forces that demanded to participate in local self-rule. On the other hand, whenever such conflicts developed into violent disturbances, Venice intervened in defense of the local elites, suppressing the popular forces. This was done despite repeated reports by Venetian governors, themselves patricians, about the corruption and even the unfaithfulness of the same elites whose prerogatives were defended by the Republic in such moments of crisis.³⁵¹

References in modern historiography to the collaboration of the Cypriot and Cretan peasantry with the invading Ottoman army during the Cyprus war (1570–71) and the war of Crete (1645–69) should be evaluated within this context. Yet the circumstances of a small village, and even more so an individual peasant family, that encounters a huge invading army cannot be considered in the same light as the episodes treated above. The choice in such circumstances must have been among flight, collaboration, or death, and the historian has no right to judge the people confronted with such a situation. There were undoubtedly also cases of collaboration in less dramatic circumstances, but despite the uneasy relationship between Venice and some of its subjects, especially in Crete, one can also bring opposite examples of collaboration with Venice in the defense of the two islands against the invading enemy. Briefly, I tend to believe that

³⁴⁹ Papadia-Lala, *Αποτιχές Ταρχαές*; O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 149–58.

³⁵⁰ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, p. 149.

³⁵¹ Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*, pp. 217–28, 241–42; Tenenti, “Le Isole Ionie,” pp. 17–18 and n. 7.

the theme of collaboration with the Ottoman armies has been overstated in both cases.³⁵²

Finally, it seems that the events in Montenegro in the 1760s that had been ignited by the appearance of "Stephen the Small" were regarded in Venice as a virtual threat to its presence in that region. The involvement of Serbian monks and priests in the rebellion must have worried the Venetian authorities in particular and led to its suppression by harsh military measures. It is doubtful, however, whether such developments could have taken place without the Russian involvement in the affairs of the western Balkans.³⁵³

X. *The Colonial Economy*

Basic Principles of Colonial Finance

One of the first acts of the Venetian Senate following the annexation of a territory to its overseas empire was to assure control over the local resources and revenues: customs, excises and other taxes, monopolies, and landed estates, as well as various obligations of groups and individuals. Venice's basic policy was to cover the expenses of colonial administration and defense out of the revenues of the subject territories, and in case there was a surplus, to assure that Venice would profit from it.³⁵⁴ Of course, a successful implementation of this policy was not always possible.

Historians are often tempted to use the extant balance sheets of the Venetian Republic and its overseas territories to evaluate the profitability of the *stato da mar* as against other parts of the Venetian empire. Yet it is often ignored that some significant revenues derived from the colonies—such as those resulting from the exportation of salt to Venice, indirect income derived from trade, payments effectuated in Venice by colonial subjects, not to mention income derived by private individuals

³⁵² For Cyprus, see Benjamin Arbel, "Résistance ou collaboration? Les Chypriotes sous la domination vénitienne," in Michel Balard, ed., *État et colonisation au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Lyons, 1989), pp. 137–41; for Crete, Papadia-Lala, *Αποτίκτες Ταρχαχές*, pp. 163–65.

³⁵³ Paladini, 'Un caos che spaventa,' pp. 183–84.

³⁵⁴ Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," p. 978; Alain Major, "Un héritage de la Quatrième Croisade. Les Vénitiens à Nauplie et à Argos au XV^e siècle," in Léon Pressouyre, ed., *Pèlerinages et croisades. Actes du 118^e colloque de Pau, 1993* (Paris, 1995), p. 284; Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien*, pp. 329–31; Jean-Claude Hocquet, "Fiscalité et pouvoir colonial. Venise et le sel dalmate aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles," in Michel Balard, ed., *État et colonisation au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Lyons, 1989), pp. 278, 286.

and Churchmen—normally do not figure in the colonial balance sheets.³⁵⁵ Nonetheless, despite these defects, the official balance sheets do provide information that cannot be found elsewhere; therefore, although we have to put them in a wider economic context, we cannot ignore them.

A quick look at the extant balance sheets shows that while some colonies appear to have had a nice surplus of revenues over expenditures, others suffered from chronic deficit. For example, at least until the appearance of the Ottomans in the western Balkans in the 1470s, Curzola enjoyed a surplus of revenues over expenses.³⁵⁶ The same applies to the Cypriot treasury from the mid 1550s onward (even without taking into account the great revenues from Cypriot salt exported to Venice).³⁵⁷ The early 18th-century Morea, if the figures cited by Leopold von Ranke are correct, seems to have been a remunerative colonial enterprise. After the first 10–15 years of Venetian rule, the territory appears to have been economically sustainable, as far as Venice was concerned.³⁵⁸

However, many territories suffered from chronic or temporary deficits, at least according to the official fiscal reports. The colonial principle of self-sufficiency was then applied on an imperial scale: richer colonies were required to cover the deficit of poorer ones. Thus in the early 15th century, Durazzo and Alessio, and at a later stage Corfu, were called upon to subsidize Scutari, Dulcigno, and Antivari, though not on a regular basis. In the Peloponnese, Napoli di Romania was normally required to cover the deficit of Argos, and in the mid-15th century, Scutari contributed to cover the deficit of Drivasto, Dagno, and Budua.³⁵⁹ Cerigo suffered from a chronic deficit, and its budget had to be continuously replenished by the treasuries of Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, or Santa Maura.³⁶⁰ From the 16th century onward, however, military expenses were such that regular subventions from Venice for this purpose could not be avoided.

³⁵⁵ On the defective nature of the colonial balance sheets, see also Andrea Andréades, "L'administration financière et économique de Venise dans ses possessions du Levant," *L'Acropole* 1 (1926), 18–19.

³⁵⁶ Schmitt, "Korčula," p. 23.

³⁵⁷ Arbel, "Η Κύπρος," p. 484.

³⁵⁸ Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," 2:326–27; see also Manfroni, *I colonizzatori italiani*, 2:291.

³⁵⁹ Major, "Un héritage," p. 281; Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien*, pp. 322–23.

³⁶⁰ Andrea M. Andreadis, *Περὶ τῆς οἰκονομικῆς διοικήσεως τῆς Ἐπτανήσου ἐπὶ βενετοκρατίας*, 2 vols (Athens, 1914), 2:252–55; Charalambos Gasparis, "Cerigo sotto il dominio veneto. Problemi di economia di un'isola di importanza strategica," in Marina Koumanoudi and Chryssa Maltezou, eds., *Venezia e Cerigo* (Venice, 2003), pp. 112, 115. See also Mueller, "Aspects of Venetian Sovereignty," pp. 37–38.

Expenditures

The salaries of the colonial civil administrators were generally financed by the resources of the colonies themselves. Likewise, public works, upkeep of ports, roads, water supply systems, salt pans, quarantine installations, and so forth were normally covered by local revenues. On exceptional occasions, however, big civic projects required subsidies from Venice. Thus, the colonization of Istria by the so-called Morlachs, a project that was carried out between the late 16th century and the 1670s, involved massive expenditures. According to Egidio Ivetic, the cost of this long-term project during the last six decades of its implementation may have reached 240,000–300,000 ducats,³⁶¹ a sum that could hardly be totally covered from the local resources.

Not surprisingly, military expenditures required, more often than not, heavy subventions from Venice. The available data on sums that are said to have been spent on the army in the “Levant” (not including war periods) range between 35,000 ducats in 1641, an exceptionally low sum, constituting merely 1.3 per cent of the total expenses, to 426,307 ducats in 1575, which then constituted 21.4 per cent of the total expenses of the state budget. The expenses on the military fleet (excluding the arsenal) ranged between 230,000 ducats in 1579 (12.3 per cent) and 557,434 in 1679 (20.6 per cent).³⁶² Somewhat paradoxically, the contraction of the overseas empire did not result in a radical reduction of military expenses. During the 18th century, military expenditures that aimed at defending the overseas territories, including the navy, the arsenal (where warships were constructed and maintained), and the units stationed overseas fluctuated between two-thirds and three-quarters of the entire military budget in the *bilanci* of 1679, 1710, and 1714 and were still higher by about 200,000 ducats than those spent on the mainland territories in 1789–90.³⁶³

In wartime the costs were, of course, much higher, necessitating emergency measures such as forced loans and additional taxation. During the War of Cyprus and Venice's involvement in the Holy League (1570–71), the Republic had to bear annual expenses amounting to 3.5 million ducats, a sum that exceeded by 30 per cent Venice's annual revenues.³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ Egidio Ivetic, *Oltremare. L'Istria nell'ultimo dominio veneto* (Venice, 2000), pp. 48–50.

³⁶² Pezzolo, “Stato, guerra e finanza,” p. 95.

³⁶³ Del Negro, “La politica militare,” p. 114.

³⁶⁴ John R. Hale, “La guerra e la pace,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 6 (1994): *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, eds. Gaetano Cozzi and Paolo Prodi, p. 245.

The long Cretan War (1645–69) was also extremely costly and coincided with a period of economic depression, which caused a considerable rise in the Republic's public debt. The Peloponnesian wars of the late 17th and early 18th centuries (1684–99, 1715–18) only aggravated the situation in this respect.³⁶⁵

Fortification projects constituted a considerable component of the Republic's military expenditures. From the 16th century onward, the large-scale projects aimed at fitting the old fortifications in the overseas territories to modern warfare technologies. For example, between 1491 and 1531, according to reports of Venetian governors of Cyprus, 190,000 ducats had been spent on the fortifications of Famagusta.³⁶⁶ By 1561, 250,000 ducats had been spent on such fortification projects in Dalmatia, of which no less than 144,000 were spent in Zara.³⁶⁷ Between 1577 and 1604, a quarter of a million ducats were spent on fortification projects in Corfu.³⁶⁸ Most of the money needed for these projects came from Venice, but subsidies were also demanded from *terraferma* cities.³⁶⁹ From a purely economic point of view, only in a few cases, such as those of Corfu, Zara, and Cerigo, did the enormous amount of money poured into fortification projects prove to be a long-term investment that enabled Venice to enjoy the fruits of colonial rule for several centuries.

Venice's "White Gold": Salt and the Colonial Economy

Salt was arguably the most important product imported from the *stato da mar*, and probably the most "colonial" product of all, since, being a state monopoly, it was generally exported from the colonies without paying for it at all, and all revenues accrued from it belonged, in principle, to the *Dominante*.³⁷⁰ It was produced in many parts of the overseas empire: in the Istrian salt-pans of Muggia, Capodistria, and Pirano;³⁷¹ in the Dalmatian

³⁶⁵ Michael Knapton, "Venezia e il Mediterraneo dalla guerra di Cipro alla pace di Passarowitz," in Roberto Alonge et al., eds., *Storia della società italiana*, vol. 11: *La Controriforma e il Seicento* (Milan, 1989), pp. 404–05.

³⁶⁶ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," p. 433.

³⁶⁷ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 172.

³⁶⁸ Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, pp. 85–97; Mallett and Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State*, p. 446.

³⁶⁹ Hale, "Part II: 1509–1617," p. 432.

³⁷⁰ Hocquet, "Fiscalité," p. 286.

³⁷¹ Hocquet, *Le sel*, 1:81–83. Istria also had some smaller salt-pans.

salt pans of Sebenico, Pago, and Trau;³⁷² in the Albanian territories of Durazzo and Cattaro;³⁷³ in the Ionian Islands of Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, and Santa Maura;³⁷⁴ in Brindisi;³⁷⁵ on Crete, in the gulf of Suda and at Spinalonga;³⁷⁶ on Cyprus, in the salt-pans of St. Lazarus, which were of enormous economic importance;³⁷⁷ in the Peloponnese, in the salt-pans of Napoli di Romania at Thermissi and in those of Raminizza, in Achaia (the latter exploited during the Venetian domination of Morea);³⁷⁸ and in the territory of Lepanto.³⁷⁹ Great quantities were sent to Venice in the hulls of merchant ships to the salt entrepôts on the *Zattere*, wherefrom they were distributed to consumers in and outside the big city.

On the basis of data provided by Sanudo, Jean-Claude Hocquet calculated that Venice's revenues derived from the marketing of salt in the 1460s amounted to about 17 per cent of the total revenues of the Venetian state. These revenues increased considerably in the following centuries. In 1621, the revenues of the salt office reached 300,191 ducats, and they continued to rise until the 1630s.³⁸⁰ Venice was continuously developing its colonial salt-pans and caring for their maintenance.³⁸¹

In 1521–22, about one-third of the yearly income of the Venetian salt office (which then amounted to about 160,000 ducats) was derived from the sale of Cypriot salt, but during later years these revenues must have been considerably higher.³⁸² The transportation of Cypriot salt was also used as part of a system of subsidies for the construction of big merchantmen

³⁷² Ibid., pp. 83–88; Tomislav Raukar, "Venezia, il sale e la struttura economica e sociale della Dalmazia nei XV e XVI secolo," in Antonio Di Vittorio, ed., *Sale e saline nell'Adriatico* (Naples, 1981), pp. 145–56; Hocquet, "Fiscalité," pp. 289–312; Paci, *La 'Scala' di Spalato*, p. 61.

³⁷³ Hocquet, *Le sel*, 1:88. Cattaro's salt pans, however, were placed under Ottoman jurisdiction in 1555.

³⁷⁴ Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 428–29; Gerassimos Pagratis, "Οι αλυκές της Κέρκυρας στην περίοδο της βενετικής κυριαρχίας," in Thanasis Kalafatis and Theodora Petanidou, eds., *Ανάπλαση και αξιοποίηση των αλυκών Επτανύσου (Κέρκυρας, Λευκάδας και Ζακύνθου). Διεπιστημονικό Συνέδριο, Λευκάδα, 30 Σεπτέμβριου—3 Οκτωβρίου 1999* (Athens, 2003), pp. 45–50; Kolyvā, "Le saline di Zante nel XVI secolo. Aspetti produttivi e gestionali," in Massimo Costantini, ed., *Il Mediterraneo centro-orientale tra vecchie e nuove egemonie* (Rome, 1998), pp. 71–98; On the salt pans of Cephalonia, see Kolyvā, "Le saline di Zante," p. 74 n. 14.

³⁷⁵ Cassandro, "Contributo alla storia," pp. 43–44.

³⁷⁶ Hocquet, *Le sel*, 1:127.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 2:227–46.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 1:91–92; Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," p. 323.

³⁷⁹ Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Geschichte Lepantos unter der Venezianherrschaft," *Südost-Forschungen* 56 (1997), 101.

³⁸⁰ Hocquet, *Le sel*, 2:386–88.

³⁸¹ Hocquet, *Le sel*, 1:113–16; Kolyvā, "Le saline di Zante"; Pagratis, "Οι αλυκές της Κέρκυρας."

³⁸² Hocquet, *Le sel*, 2:387.

in Venice. As long as Cyprus remained under Venetian rule, the number of Venetian merchantmen, especially big ones, reached unprecedented proportions,³⁸³ a situation which would probably not reoccur. After the loss of Cyprus and its lucrative salt pans, the Republic spent a quarter of a million ducats to develop the salt-pans in Crete, in the Bay of Suda.³⁸⁴

In Istria, Pirano was the most important salt producer. Here the system was different from those in Cyprus or Crete. The local community was responsible for the production and sold to the salt office in Venice pre-established quantities on a contractual basis (*partito de' sali*). The community also enjoyed fiscal revenues derived from the salt production. A substantial part of Pirano's working population was employed in this industry. The salt-pans of Muggia and Capodistria were less productive but had their good moments as well.³⁸⁵ Between 1587 and 1593 the salt exported from the small island of Pago to Venice constituted nearly 22 per cent of the *Serenissima's* total salt imports. One-quarter of the island's production could be marketed by the local entrepreneurs in other places and was mainly used as a means of payment for wheat and other comestibles bought on the Adriatic mainland, as well as for shipments to Lesina, where this product was used for the salted fish industry.³⁸⁶

Colonial Land Resources

The land market of Venice's overseas dominions was of vast proportions, and the state was the biggest landowner there. Lands leased out by the state were subject to payments in kind and in cash and constituted a primary source of revenue.³⁸⁷ Many lands were feudal estates, so in the absence of direct heirs, they reverted to the *Dominante*, which could dispose of them as it saw fit. In Cyprus and Corfu, and presumably also elsewhere, Venice used a form of "feudal sale," which kept landed estates subjected to feudal laws.³⁸⁸ Quite often, such transactions took place in Venice by

³⁸³ Frederic C. Lane, "Venetian Shipping during the Commercial Revolution," *American Historical Review* 38 (1933), 8, repr. in his *Venice and History, The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane* (Baltimore, 1966), pp. 3–24.

³⁸⁴ Hocquet, *Le sel*, 1:138–141, 302.

³⁸⁵ Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, pp. 84–87; Ivetic, *Oltremare*, pp. 174–80.

³⁸⁶ Hocquet, "Fiscalité," pp. 282, 285, 300–05, 310–11.

³⁸⁷ For Negroponte, see Silvano Borsari, *L'Eubea veneziana* (Venice, 2007), p. 128; for Cyprus, Arbel, "Η Κύπρος," p. 483 n. 144.

³⁸⁸ Arbel, "Greek Magnates," pp. 330–31; Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 470–71. See also Giuseppe Gullino, "Un problema aperto: Venezia e il tardo feudalesimo," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 7 (1983), 96.

direct disbursement to the Republic's central treasury and, consequently, without leaving any trace in the colonial balance sheets.³⁸⁹

After 1699, the expanse of Venetian territories in Dalmatia and Albania grew from 2000 to 4500 Italian square miles. The new lands had belonged to the Ottoman sultan, and after their appropriation by Venice they became part of the Republic's demesne.³⁹⁰ These new lands were not very fertile, and most of the immigrants who reached them from Ottoman lands, the so-called Morlachs, were accustomed to pasture economy rather than to agriculture. Problems of food supply therefore became of pivotal importance, and Venice had to cope with the question of how to transform the Morlachs into peasants. To solve these problems, the Republic in 1755 undertook a large-scale agrarian reform in the territories of the *Nuovo* and *Nuovissimo Acquisto*. The state offered lands in perpetual lease subject to three categories: noblemen could lease 300 Paduan *campi* per person, *cittadini* could lease 200 *campi*, and Morlachs (the only ones expected to work the land themselves) 2 *campi* (about 2/3 of a hectare). In the absence of direct male heirs, these lands reverted to the state.³⁹¹ The principles underlying this reform were probably inspired by Venice's experience in the early 18th-century Morea, where the Republic had faced a similar situation of having at its disposal a vast amount of public lands and had tried different models of leasehold before finally opting for perpetual lease combined with a low inheritance tax.³⁹²

Modern historians consider this project a failure, though not always for the same reasons. One of its underlying defects was the inability of the plots allotted to Morlachs to economically sustain their families. That said, the law provided a basic, though minimal, security to Morlach families, both with regard to the plots directly held in lease from the state as well as for those that were subleased from private landlords. But historians agree that the law was unable to provide a comprehensive answer to the multiple problems presented by the new territories and their relatively newly settled inhabitants.³⁹³

³⁸⁹ E.g., Arbel, "Greek Magnates," p. 330; Aristidou, *Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα*, 4:161.

³⁹⁰ [Anon.], "Economia rurale: alcuni cenni statistici sulla Dalmazia," *Giornale d'Agricoltura* 2 (Jan.–March 1808), p. 3. The Italian mile used here must be the one officially established in Milan in 1803 (1.482 km.), Ronald Edward Zupko, *Italian Weights and Measures from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1981), p. 153.

³⁹¹ Berengo, "Problemi economico-sociali," pp. 474–75. One Paduan *campo* = 3862.57 sq. metres.

³⁹² Ranke, "Die Venezianer in Morea," pp. 318–21.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 475–77; Paladini, 'Un caos che spaventa,' pp. 40–42, 95–150.

Individual Venetian Presence Overseas

For a fuller evaluation of the economic importance of the *stato da mar* we must go beyond the public sphere of expenditures and revenues and look, from a Venetian perspective, at the colonial economy in general. First we must consider the private benefits that many Venetians derived from the colonies, a topic that cannot be treated here in great detail. Thousands of Venetian citizens served in the overseas colonies in official capacities, including military service, and many of them took advantage of their stay to round up their revenues.³⁹⁴ Similarly, many Venetians enjoyed nice revenues from ecclesiastical benefices held by them in the colonies.³⁹⁵ Others, particularly patricians, held estates overseas, were settled there for several generations, and derived profits from their presence there.³⁹⁶ Taxation of these revenues benefited the Republic as well. Marriage between Venetian patricians and rich colonial heiresses was a rather common phenomenon, which often ended up transforming Venetian families into local barons and feudatories in Crete, Corfu, Cyprus, and the Aegean.³⁹⁷ Not uncommon was a direct or indirect combination of these factors: official service, involvement in the colonial economy, holding Church benefices, marriage alliances with local dignitaries, and so forth.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ Praga, *History of Dalmatia*, p. 172; O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 57–74; Mueller, "Aspects of Venetian Sovereignty," p. 37; Sander, *Urban Elites*, pp. 230–32; Benjamin Arbel, "Operating Trading Networks in Times of War: A Sixteenth-Century Venetian Patrician between Public Service and Levant Trade," in Suraiya Faruqi and Gilles Veinstein, eds., *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire* (Leuven, 2008), pp. 23–33.

³⁹⁵ Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," pp. 974–75; Mueller, "Aspects of Venetian Sovereignty," pp. 39–40.

³⁹⁶ In the late 16th century there were around 400 families of patrician settlers in Crete; Monique O'Connell, "The Venetian Patriciate in the Mediterranean: Legal Identity and Lineage in Fifteenth Century Venetian Crete," *Renaissance Quarterly* 57.2 (2004), 486n72. See also Frederic C. Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice, 1418–1449* (Baltimore, 1944), pp. 23, 33–34, 36–37, 40; for Cerigo, see Marina Koumanoudi, "Fragments of an Island Economy: The Venier Kytherean Estate Records (15th C.)," in Maltezou, Tzavara, and Vlassi, eds., *I Greci durante La venetocrazia*, pp. 497–514; for Istria, Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 55; for Negroponte, Reinhold C. Mueller, "Ambienti ecclesiastici e laici attorno alla figura di Chiara Bugni," in Reinhold C. Mueller and Gabriella Zarri, *La vita e i sermoni di Chiara Bugni, Clarissa veneziana* (Rome, 2011), pp. 72–77.

³⁹⁷ E.g., Lunzi, *Della condizione*, pp. 426, 467; Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, p. 209; Arbel, "Greek Magnates," pp. 329, 331–32, 334, 336–37; O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 62–69; Jacoby, *La féodalité*, pp. 264–65, 305.

³⁹⁸ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*, pp. 62–69; Reinhold C. Mueller, "Pubblico e privato nel dominio veneziano delle isole greche a metà Quattrocento: il caso dei Giustinian," in Chryssa Maltezou and Gherardo Ortalli, eds., *Venezia e le Isole Ionie* (Venice, 2005), pp. 71–100; Sander, *Urban Elites*, pp. 229–34.

An Imperial Economy

No less important was the contribution to the Venetian economy of the various economic activities carried out in the overseas dominions, through which the Venetians received raw material for their industries and manufactories, comestibles for daily consumption, building materials for construction, profits derived from maritime transport, and also fiscal revenues. To a certain extent, the colonies were also markets for Venetian industries and manufactories.

Venetian shipping and maritime trade was greatly dependent on the colonies. The ability to anchor in a Venetian port, where one could find a haven free from corsairs and enemy warships, up-to-date information on conditions along the route, technical support and maintenance services, water and provisions for human beings and animals on board, and, more generally, a milieu that was culturally familiar and supportive, offered great advantages to Venetian merchantmen and their crews. But the colonies were not merely maritime stations along the routes to other destinations. Several of them were important emporia that linked the Venetian trading network to regional trade routes and networks, and there was hardly any colony that did not contribute something of its own to Venice's system of maritime trade.

The Istrian ports, particularly Pola and Parenzo, were essential stations for ships sailing from Venice to various destinations in the Adriatic and beyond, to complete the crew, or to wait for other vessels in order to sail in convoy. Ships that returned to Venice stopped there too, waiting for permission from the public health officers to proceed to Venice, to engage a local pilot for entering into the lagoon, and to inform agents in Venice about their cargo.³⁹⁹ But Istria also had its salt pans, its shipbuilding industry, where the famous flat-bottomed *marani* were built, and its ports served as bases for independent shipping and fishing activity within the Adriatic Sea.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, the province was a major supplier of timber for the Venetian arsenal, firewood, stones (*pietra d'Istria*) for urban construction and dikes, salt, salted fish, olive oil, wine, wax, and leather.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ E.g., Sanudo, *I diarii*, 2:126, 161, 232–33, 470; *ibid.*, 5:69, 938; *ibid.*, 27:6.

⁴⁰⁰ Lane, "Venetian Shipping" 8; *idem*, *Navires*, pp. 50n, 98; Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, pp. 88–89. See also Egido Evetic, "La flotta da pesca e da commercio dell'Istria veneta nel 1746," *Archivio veneto* 144 (1995), 145–56.

⁴⁰¹ Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, pp. 77–78, 102, 136; Ivetic, *Oltremare*, pp. 133–169, 204; Raffaello Vergani, "Legname per l'arsenale: I boschi "banditi" nella Repubblica di Venezia, secoli XV–XVII," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *Ricchezza del mare ricchezza dal mare*.

All Venetian towns in Dalmatia and “Albania,” particularly Zara, Trau, Antivari, Cattaro, and Perasto, as well as the Dalmatian islands, and, from the late 16th century, also Spalato, were centers of transit trade between the western Ottoman provinces and the Adriatic world. Despite prohibitions and sanctions in this respect, the economy of these territories greatly depended on their role as intermediaries between the Balkan hinterland and the western shores of the Adriatic, the so-called *Sottovento*.⁴⁰² At some point Venice seems to have allowed its Dalmatian subjects to engage in this trade,⁴⁰³ continuing at the same time its endless struggle against the competition of rival ports on both the western and eastern coasts of the Adriatic Sea.⁴⁰⁴

Venice was greatly interested in attracting commodities originating from the inner Balkans, especially during the 16th-century heyday of its demographic and industrial expansion. Food products, such as grains, cheese, and meat; raw materials for its manufactures, such as hides and skins, acorns (*valonie*), kermes (*grana*), tar, and wool; animals, such as horses, cattle, and smaller farm animals; and also the principal source of energy—firewood—all came from those parts. In return for these commodities, Venice and Venetian merchants could offer salt, which was in great demand in the inner Balkan provinces and also on the western Adriatic coasts, as well as finished products originating from Venice and its mainland territories.⁴⁰⁵

Atti della trentasettesima settimana di studi, Prato, 11–15 Aprile 2005 (Florence, 2005), p. 403; Karl Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea. Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2009), pp. 37, 167–70, 296. Giorgio Gianighian and Paola Pavanini, *Venice—the Basics* (Venice, 2010), pp. 20–21, 31, 42.

⁴⁰² Levi, *Venezia e il Montenegro*; Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien*, 459; Ivan Pederin, “Commercio, economia, pesca, Arti e mestieri in Arbe nel Quattrocento,” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 147.2 (1989), 215–49; Schmitt, “Contrabannum,” p. 8; Schmitt, “Korčula,” pp. 62–70.

⁴⁰³ Inferred from the demand of the Corfiots in 1522 to enjoy the same right in this respect as the Dalmatian merchants; see Gerassimos D. Pagratis, “Trade and Shipping in Corfu (1496–1538),” *International Journal of Maritime History* 16.2 (2004), pp. 175–76.

⁴⁰⁴ Paci, *La ‘Scala’ di Spalato*; Massimo Costantini, “‘Sottovento.’ I traffici veneziani con la sponda occidentale del medio-basso Adriatico,” *Εἰσα καὶ Εξπερία* 4 (1999–2000), pp. 282–96; Ugo Tucci, “Venezia, Ancona e i problemi della navigazione adriatica nel Cinquecento,” *Atti e memorie della Deputazione di storia patria per le Marche* 87 (1982), 147–70; Benjamin Ravid, “A Tale of Three Cities and their Raison d’État: Ancona, Venice, Livorno and the Competition for Jewish Merchants in the Sixteenth Century,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 6 (1991), 138–62.

⁴⁰⁵ Edoardo Demo, “Wool and Silk: The Textile Urban Industry of the Venetian Mainland (15th–17th Centuries),” in Paola Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre of the Old World. Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland, 1400–1800* (Toronto, 2006), p. 228;

The zone of the Bocche di Cattaro (Boke Kotorske) was characterized by intensive movements of commodities and people, connecting the inner Balkans, and even Istanbul, with the Adriatic world.⁴⁰⁶ The inland parts of Montenegro relied heavily on the coastal towns for manufactured goods, whereas Cattaro depended on the interior areas for primary products.⁴⁰⁷ The importance of the Bocche di Cattaro further increased in 1687, following the Venetian occupation of Castelnuovo (Herzeg Novi), the fortified town commanding the entrance to the Bocche. Venetian public couriers (mostly Montenegrins) passed regularly through Cattaro on their voyages between the Venice and Istanbul.⁴⁰⁸ News (*avvisi*) from the inner Balkans and Istanbul were sent from Cattaro to Corfu by special frigates kept for this purpose.⁴⁰⁹ The economy of Perasto, the small port town inside the Bocche which was also known for its shipbuilding activity, greatly depended on the shipping of comestibles, such as salted cheese and meat, originating from the inner Balkans, to various Adriatic destinations. At the end of the 16th century it was the base of about 50 ships of different size.⁴¹⁰

From 1590, following the initiative of the Jewish merchant Daniel Rodriga, Spalato became the major center of transit trade between Venice and the inner Balkans.⁴¹¹ A special galley service was established, connecting this port with Venice six times yearly, to protect merchants and their commodities from piratical attacks. In the 1620s, when Spalato was at the height of its commercial development, about one-quarter of all goods that reached Venice arrived from this port, providing a fiscal income of about 200,000 ducats.⁴¹² The presence of Jewish consuls in 16th-century Venice, Spalato, and Corfu and in 17th-century Zante also reflected the seminal

Paci, *La 'Scala' di Spalato*, 47–48, 52, 57, 61, 77, 79, 89, 104, 117, 131; Hocquet, *Le sel*, 1:331–32, 334–35; *ibid.*, 2:280–81.

⁴⁰⁶ Paci, *La 'Scala' di Spalato*, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁷ Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain*, p. 111.

⁴⁰⁸ Francis Seymour Stevenson, *A History of Montenegro* (London, 1912), pp. 109–10; Luciano De Zanche, *Tra Costantinopoli e Venezia. Dispacci di stato e lettere di mercanti dal basso medioevo alla caduta sella Serenissima* (Prato, 2000), pp. 45–46.

⁴⁰⁹ Pagratis, ed., *Οι εκθέσεις*, 398.

⁴¹⁰ Ljubić, ed., *Commissiones et relationes*, 2:48 (1528); Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 141. Hocquet, *Le sel*, 2:280; On Perasto's shipping see Paci, *La 'Scala' di Spalato*, p. 88.

⁴¹¹ Paci, *La 'Scala' di Spalato*; Benjamin Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade of the Jewish Merchants of Venice," in Aaron Mirsky, Avraham Grossman, and Yosef Kaplan, eds., *Exile and Diaspora. Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart* (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 203–23.

⁴¹² Paci, *La 'Scala' di Spalato*, pp. 92–93.

function of Jewish merchants in this phase.⁴¹³ However, the insecurity reigning on the inner roads and the competition of Ragusa and the Austrian ports of Trieste and Fiume delivered fatal blows to this enterprise in the 18th century.⁴¹⁴

Until 1500, Coron and Modon served as major emporia of Venice's Mediterranean trade. Beyond offering maritime outlets for a rich agricultural hinterland, their location at close quarters to the entry into (or exit from) the Adriatic Sea made them ideal emporia, with storage and transshipment services for vessels that brought commodities from the east and preferred to avoid sailing up the Adriatic. For this and other reasons, these ports were obligatory stations for Venetian merchant ships sailing outside the Adriatic Sea. After the loss of these ports, Zante and Corfu filled their role, a change which transformed these islands into bustling trading centers, with an expanding local shipping activity connecting Venice with the coasts of Epirus, Central Greece, Albania, the Peloponnese, southern Italy, and other markets. These islands also provided Venice with products that were essential for its economy: acorns, cotton and cotton yarn, wax, flax, wool, hides, silk, bitumen, kermes, ash, stones, and timber.⁴¹⁵ Zante's economic importance, which further developed following the Ottoman invasion of Corfu in 1538, was also linked to its vicinity to the Peloponnese and southwestern provinces of central Greece. But from the late 16th century its economy became increasingly dependent on the local currant production and export, mainly by English and later also Dutch vessels.⁴¹⁶ Cephalonia, which likewise developed into a major currant producer and exporter, also specialized in the exportation of farm animals, meat and

⁴¹³ Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations. Jews and Venetians in the Early-Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden, 1995), pp. 26–27, 75, 177–78; Benjamin Arbel, "Jews in International Trade: The Emergence of the Levantines and Ponentines," in Robert C. David and Benjamin C. Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore/London, 2001), pp. 92–93; Kolyvā, "The Jews of Zante between the Serenissima and the Sublime Port: The Local Community and the Jewish Consuls," in Benjamin Arbel, ed., *Minorities in Colonial Settings: The Jews in Venice's Hellenic Territories*, special issue of the *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 27.2 (2012), 204–13.

⁴¹⁴ Paci, *La 'Scala' di Splato*, pp. 124–26; Berengo, "Problemi economico-sociali," pp. 495–99.

⁴¹⁵ Benjamin Arbel, "The Ionian Islands and Venice's Trading System during the Sixteenth Century," in *ΣΤ' Διεθνές Πανιώνιο Συνέδριο, Ζάκυνθος, 23–27 Σεπτεμβρίου 1997. Πρακτικά*, 2 vols (Salonica/Athens, 2000–01), 2:147–60; Pagratis, "Trade and Shipping."

⁴¹⁶ Maria Fusaro, *Uva passa. una guerra commerciale tra Venezia e l'Inghilterra (1540–1640)* (Venice, 1996); Daniel Koster, "The Beginning of Dutch Navigation and Trade in the Levant," www.nia.gr/araproject.hrm, accessed 17 July 2012; Daniel Koster, "The Conquering Dutch Merchants and Shipowners," *Thesaurismata* 36 (2006), 116.

dairy products, as well as olive oil.⁴¹⁷ As will be described shortly, from the 1740s onwards, Corfu's place in the Venetian map of commerce was based mainly on olive oil production and exportation.

Crete, or rather the port of Candia, was an essential maritime station on the routes between Venice and the eastern Mediterranean, particularly Egypt, but also between Venice and western Europe. During the first half of the 15th century, Candia was still a slave-trade emporium (in addition to being a market by its own right); at that stage slaves mainly reached the island from the northern Black Sea area.⁴¹⁸ However, with its rich agricultural production, predominantly of wine, cheese, and oil, which were exported in great quantities, Crete had much to offer to Venice, to other Venetian colonies, and to various regions outside the Venetian state. Istanbul offered a regular market for Cretan lemons, oranges, olives, oil, wax, honey, cotton, raisins, cheese, and, of course, wine.⁴¹⁹

Wine, especially the famous Malvasia (Malmsey), was Crete's principal export product during the last two centuries of Venetian rule.⁴²⁰ Following the appearance of English ships in the Mediterranean and their involvement in the exportation of Cretan wine to England in the late 15th century, a fierce commercial rivalry developed between England and Venice, in which the two states tried to discourage foreign ships from carrying Cretan wine to England. But Cretan wine production did not depend on the English market exclusively, since other regions, especially in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, were also greatly attracted by this product. In this case too, the merchandise concerned did not pass through Venice, and in many cases it was transported not on board Venetian ships but, rather, on Cretan ones.⁴²¹ In the early 17th century, Dutch ships seem to

⁴¹⁷ Cephalonia was reported in 1548 to have 100,000 heads of livestock. See Zapanti, *Κεφαλονιά*, pp. 267–68. See also Pagratis, "Trade and Shipping," p. 190, and for the 18th century, Vincenzo Antonio Formaleoni, *Topografia veneta, ovvero descrizione dello stato veneto* etc., 4 vols (Venice, 1787), 3:63.

⁴¹⁸ Charles Verlinden, "La Crète, débouché et plaque tournante de la traite des esclaves aux 14^e et 15^e siècles," *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, 6 vols (Milan, 1962), 3:591–669.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 249–50; Eric R Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople* (Baltimore, 2006), p. 81.

⁴²⁰ Kostas T. Tsiknakis, ed., *Il miglior vino del mondo. Το κρητικό κρασί στις αρχαικές πηγές της βενετοκρατίας* (Gazi, 2005); Ilias Anagnostakis, ed., *Μονεμβάσιος οίνος-Μονεμβάσι[α]-Malvasia* (Athens, 2008).

⁴²¹ Geor von Schanz, *Englische Handelspolitik gegen Ende des Mittelalters, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Zeitalters der beiden ersten Tudors, Heinrich VII Und Heinrich VIII* (Leipzig, 1881), pp. 130–42; William Reginald Lowder, "Candie Wine: Some Documents Relating to Trade between England and Crete during the Reign of King Henry VIII," *Ελληνικά* 12 (1952), 97–102; Ugo Tucci, "Le commerce maritime du vin de Crète," in Klaus

have assumed the leading place among the western trading nations that were active in Cretan ports.⁴²²

Under Venetian rule, Cyprus seems to have been the Republic's richest overseas colony, whose economy was, to considerable extent, geared for exportation. In addition to its abundant salt pans, Cyprus exported sugar and, increasingly, cotton. Until the mid-16th century it also often produced wheat and barley in quantities that left considerable surplus for export. Last but not least, the island's importance as a front base for Venice's maritime trade in the eastern Mediterranean was enormous.⁴²³

Smaller overseas colonies were often quite profitable for Venice. Tana, on the northern outskirts of the Black Sea, served, until its fall in 1478, as an important commercial emporium, particularly for the slave trade and the trade in furs, roe, or caviar, attracting Venetian vessels to this farthest outpost of Venice's colonial empire.⁴²⁴ Silk was the staple of Tinos. It was exported to Italy and, after 1670, also to France. The silk economy seems to have encouraged population growth; during the second half of the 16th century the island was inhabited by about 9000–10,000 people, and by the late 1630s its population seems to have doubled.⁴²⁵ The island of Arbe provided tow for Venice's shipbuilding industry, as well as honey for the Venetian cuisine, but it also exported wool, coarse woollens, and leather.⁴²⁶

Friedland, ed., *Maritime Food Transport* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 1994), pp. 199–211; Tucci, "Il commercio del vino nell'economia cretese," in Gherardo Ortalli, ed., *Venezia e Creta* (Venice, 1998), pp. 183–206; Benjamin Arbel, "The 'Jewish Wine' of Crete," in Ilias Anagnostakis, ed., *Μομεμβάσιος οίνος-Μομεμβασ(ι)ά-Malvasia* (Athens, 2008), pp. 81–88; Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 1:612–24; Gigliola Pagano de Divitiis, *Mercanti Inglesi nell'Italia del Seicento* (Venice, 1990), pp. 18–21.

⁴²² Angeliki Panopoulou, "Οψεις της ναυτιλιακής κίνησης του Χάνδακα το 17ο αιώνα," *Κρητική Εστία Δ/2* (1988), 152–210; Koster, "The Beginning of Dutch Navigation and Trade with the Levant"; Koster, "The Conquering Dutch Merchants and Shipowners," pp. 97–166; Tucci, "Il commercio del vino," p. 206.

⁴²³ Benjamin Arbel, "The Economy of Cyprus during the Venetian Period (1473–1571)," in Vassos Karageorghis and D. Michaelides, eds., *The Development of the Cypriot Economy from the Prehistoric Period to the Present Day* (Nicosia, 1996), pp. 185–92.

⁴²⁴ Charles Verlinden, "La colonie vénitienne de Tana, centre de la traite des esclaves au XIV^e et au début du XV^e siècle," *Studi in onore di Gino Luzzatto*, 2 vols (Milan, 1950), 2:1–25; Skrzinskaja, "Storia della Tana," pp. 22–23, 33; Luigi Messadaglia, "Schienale e morona. Storia di due vocaboli e contributo allo studio degli usi alimentari e dei traffici veneti con il Levante," *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Classe di scienze morali e letterarie* 101.2 (1941), 50; Bernard Doumerc, "La Tana au XV^e siècle: comptoir ou colonie?" in Michel Balard, ed., *État et colonisation au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Lyons, 1989), pp. 251–66.

⁴²⁵ Lamansky, *Secrets d'État de Venise*, p. 652; Miller, *The Latins*, p. 631; Slot, *Archipelagus*, pp. 18–19 and n. 24, 28–29, 56, 264, 290, 331 n. 24.

⁴²⁶ Pederin, "Commercio, economia, pesca," pp. 227–28, 230.

In the mid-16th century, Cherso and Ossero had 120,000 heads of sheep and goats, in addition to a great quantity of bovines, horses, and donkeys, exceeding by far the local needs. A portion of these livestock, however, served for the production of local woollens.⁴²⁷ Beyond serving as an outlet for various agricultural products, Zara during the second half of the 16th and the early 17th century became a main transit station for thousands of oxen that were being led from Transylvania to Venice's abatoirs, an activity that was later characterized by cycles of peaks and troughs related to periods of peace and war with the Ottomans.⁴²⁸ In the 18th century, firewood exported from Zara to Venice was exempted from export duties. It was often shipped by small vessels from Arbe.⁴²⁹ The fishing industry was a central component of the economy of the Adriatic islands, such as Cherso and Ossero, Lesina, Arbe, and Curzola, and a great part of it served the markets of Venice and its other overseas territories. In the late 16th century the exportation of salted fish from Curzola to Venice, Crete, Zante, and Cephalonia was dominated by Greek entrepreneurs and ship masters.⁴³⁰ The salt for this industry arrived from Pago, which also served the fish industry at Lesina.⁴³¹ Cattaro was an important supplier of pitch for the Venetian shipbuilding industry.⁴³² The same colony also excelled in its tanning manufactories and in the production of coarse woollens and tallow candles, all of which were exported to the neighboring areas of Albania, to Venice, and to Apulia.⁴³³

Olive Oil: A Colonial Staple in the Empire's Twilight

Olive oil was a central item in the economy of the Venetian state. As one of the greatest cities in Renaissance Europe, Venice used great quantities of oil for food and lighting, for its important soap industry (which consumed about one-third of the imports around 1600), as well as in cloth

⁴²⁷ Arbel, "Colonie d'Oltremare," p. 962.

⁴²⁸ Michael Knapton, "Tra Dominante e Dominio (1517–1630)," in Gaetano Cozzi, Michael Knapton, and Giovanni Scarabello, eds., *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna. Dal 1517 alla fine della Repubblica* (Turin, 1992), p. 368; Mayhew, *Dalmatia*, pp. 250, 254–55.

⁴²⁹ Pederin, "Das venezianische Handelssystem," p. 159; Pederin, "Commercio, economia, pesca," p. 225.

⁴³⁰ Schmitt, "Das venezianische Südosteuropa," p. 86.

⁴³¹ Arbel, "Colonie d'oltremare," p. 962; Schmitt, "Korčula"; Pederin, "Commercio, economia, pesca," p. 238; Hocquet, *Le sel*, 1:318–21; Hocquet, "Fiscalité," pp. 303–07.

⁴³² Raffaello Vergani, "Le materie prime," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 12 (1991): *Il mare*, eds. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, p. 302.

⁴³³ Gelcich, *Memorie storiche*, pp. 166–67.

manufacturing. Trade in olive oil was at the core of an intensive maritime trade between Venice and Apulia, which, until the early 18th century, was Venice's main olive oil supplier. Venice's market could also be used for further distribution of olive oil to the *terraferma*, to other Italian states, and to countries outside the peninsula.⁴³⁴

The Republic first attempted to reduce her dependence on the Apulian supply in 1565, with an act that promised premiums to those who would plant olive trees in uncultivated lands or in lands belonging to the public demesne in the *stato da mar*. In 1599 an order was sent to Corfu, instructing the island's governors to act against inhabitants who cut or burned olive trees and also directed them to oblige agriculturists to plant olive trees in uncultivated lands. Against the backdrop of a crisis in the Apulian oil supply in 1623, the Senate again ordered its representatives in Istria, Dalmatia, Albania, Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, and Crete to take measures to significantly increase the number of olive trees, so as to assure independence from foreign suppliers and prevent the flow of capital to foreign lands.⁴³⁵ The stated motivation exposes a concept of a mercantilist economy geared to the interests of the metropolis.

Although Apulian olive oil was still dominant in Venetian markets until the beginning of the following century, greater quantities of oil reached Venice from the Ionian Islands around the middle of the 17th century.⁴³⁶ But it was only in the 1740s, with the rise in prices of Apulian oil, that a long-term change took place. From that moment on, most of the olive oil imported to Venice originated from the Ionian Islands (mainly from Corfu, but also from Cephalonia, Zante, Paxo, and Santa Maura) and, to a lesser extent, from Istria and Dalmatia. It was then considered the principal commodity of Venice's maritime commerce and also constituted the

⁴³⁴ Salvatore Ciriaco, *Olio ed ebrei nella Repubblica veneta del Settecento* (Venice, 1975), pp. 9–15; Ivo Mattozzi, "Crisi, stagnazione e mutamento nello stato veneziano seicentesco: il caso del commercio e della produzione olearia," *Studi veneziani* 4 (1980), 199–276; Massimo Costantini, "L'olio della Serenissima, dal commercio alla produzione. Per una storia dell'uso produttivo di un territorio d'oltremare in una strategia mercantilistica," in Massimo Costantini and Aliki Nikiforou, eds., *Levante Veneziano. Aspetti di storia delle Isole Ionie al tempo della Serenissima* (Rome, 1996), pp. 11–19.

⁴³⁵ Mattozzi, "Crisi," pp. 216–17, 222, 227.

⁴³⁶ Ivo Mattozzi, "Olio pugliese e olio ionico nel commercio veneziano sei-settecentesco," in *Mercati e consumi. Organizzazione e qualificazione del commercio in Italia dal XII al XX secolo. I° Convegno Nazionale di Storia del commercio in Italia* (Reggio Emilia-Modena, giugno 1984) (Bologna, 1986), p. 150.

main source of Venice's customs revenues.⁴³⁷ Although not a few colonial subjects derived great profit from the oil economy, the enlistment of the Ionian Islands (Corfu in particular) to Venice's economic needs had serious repercussions on the island.⁴³⁸

Colonial Shipping and the Limits of Colonial Control

During the second half of the 15th century, Venice confronted a serious crisis in its shipbuilding industry, mainly resultant from the competition of the *marani*, those unarmed lateen-rigged vessels built in Istria and generally used to transport bulky and heavy materials. These vessels were highly successful in Adriatic and Mediterranean trade, thanks to their lower operational costs. Venice tried to prevent this competition by forbidding in the late 1460s the construction of any ship of 60 tons or more between Venice and the Quarnaro Gulf, an act that pushed the colonial shipbuilding industry further south. In the 1480s a new law allowed building and using such vessels only for Adriatic voyages that did not touch Venice or Ragusa,⁴³⁹ but this limitation does not seem to have withstood the development of shipping in the Venetian empire. In early 16th-century Corfu, for example, vessels weighing more than 30 tons were built and employed without any apparent limitation regarding their destinations.⁴⁴⁰ A similar development, presumably on an even larger scale, can be observed in 16th-century Crete.⁴⁴¹ Recent scholarship has brought to light the broad dimensions of 18th-century Greek shipping, a great part of which was operated by Venetian subjects, who even allowed themselves, whenever it proved to be profitable, to sail under foreign flags.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁷ Ciriaco, *Olio ed ebrei*, pp. 91–109; Mattozzi, “Olio pugliese e olio ionico,” pp. 147, 149–50, 153–54; Ivetic, *L'Istria moderna*, p. 101.

⁴³⁸ Mattozzi, “Olio pugliese e olio ionico,” pp. 154–57.

⁴³⁹ Lane, “Venetian Shipping,” pp. 8–9; on the *marani*, see also Hocquet, *Le sel*, 2:98–99.

⁴⁴⁰ Gerassimos D. Pagratis, “Ships and Shipbuilding in Corfu in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century,” *Mediterranea* 22 (2011), 237–46.

⁴⁴¹ Chryssa A. Maltezou, *Η Κρήνη στη διαρκεία της περιόδου της βενετοκρατίας (1211–1669)* (Iraklion, 1990), pp. 65–68; Arbel, “Colonie d'oltremare,” p. 977.

⁴⁴² Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, p. 209; Gerassimos D. Pagratis, “Shipping Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century: The Case of the Greek Subjects of Venice,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25.1 (2010), 67–81; Gerassimos D. Pagratis, “Greek Commercial Shipping from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century. Literature Review and Research Perspectives,” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 12.2 (2002), 411–33; Molly Greene, “Trading Identities: The Sixteenth-Century Greek Moment,” in Adnan Husain and Katherine E. Fleming, eds., *A Faithful Sea: The Religious Cultures of the Mediterranean, 1200–1700* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 121–48.

In this sector of private shipping it was difficult to deny the advantages of cheaper and more easily operable merchantmen and the availability of adequate timber in the Adriatic provinces.⁴⁴³ Eventually, Venice saw no point in preventing its own colonial subjects from building ships. After the mid-16th century, ships were even built with public subvention in Dalmatia, particularly on the island of Curzola (whose shipbuilders could use timber from the *Sottovento*), as well as on Crete.⁴⁴⁴ In the latter case, the new policy was combined with an encouragement to build galleons, which were well-suited for defense against corsairs as well as for warfare against enemy fleets.⁴⁴⁵ Cattaro and Perasto were also shipbuilding centers.⁴⁴⁶ The range of overseas territories whose natural resources were enlisted to serve the Venetian shipbuilding industry was thus extended, but the colonial subjects were the ones whose involvement in the maritime sector was on the rise.

We have seen that English and Dutch ships (to which we should add French ones) were active in great numbers in Crete and the Ionian Islands from the late 16th century onward. They were there to stay for a long time, as reflected by the presence of their consuls in Venetian territories. English consuls appeared in Crete in 1522 and in Zante from the 1620s, and there were English vice-consuls in Corfu and Cephalonia in 1672, if not earlier.⁴⁴⁷ Dutch consuls were established in Zante in 1618 and in Crete in 1625.⁴⁴⁸ At the beginning of the 18th century, Corfu hosted consuls from Naples, France, Genoa, the Netherlands, Messina, the Papal States, and Malta. However, these "nations" were always ready to look for better

⁴⁴³ It was even harder to cope with the Ragusans, who operated their vessels in Venice's Dalmatian ports under the cover of Venetian subjects. See Hocquet, *Le sel*, 2:528.

⁴⁴⁴ Lane, "Venetian Shipping," pp. 19–20; Frederic C. Lane, *Navires Et Constructeurs À Venise Pendant La Renaissance* (Paris, 1965), pp. 48 n., 106–08; Massimo Costantini, "I galeoni di Candia nella congiuntura marittima veneziana cinque-seicetesca," in Gherardo Ortalli, ed., *Venezia e Creta* (Venice, 1998), pp. 207–32.

⁴⁴⁵ Massimo Costantini, "I galeoni di Candia," pp. 216–29; Baroutos, "Sovvention per fabricar galioni"; Franco Rossi, "Riformimenti marittimi agli arsenali veneziani del Levante," in Gherardo Ortalli, ed., *Venezia e Creta* (Venice, 1998), pp. 415–42.

⁴⁴⁶ Gelcich, *Memorie storiche*, pp. 165–66; Ljubić, *Commissiones et relationes*, 2:8 (1528); Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, p. 141. Hocquet, *Le sel*, 2:280; on Perasto, see Paci, *La 'Scala' di Splato*, p. 88.

⁴⁴⁷ Benjamin Arbel, "Riflessioni sul ruolo di Creta nel commercio mediterraneo del Cinquecento," in Gherardo Ortalli, ed., *Venezia e Creta* (Venice, 1998), p. 252; Alfred Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London, 1935), p. 67; Mortimer Epstein, *The English Levant Company. Its Foundation and its History to 1640* (London, 1908), pp. 98–99; Allen B. Hinds, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, vol. 37 (1671–72) (London, 1939), no. 298.

⁴⁴⁸ Koster, "The Conquering Dutch Merchants and Shipowners," pp. 116–17.

business opportunities. French, English, Dutch, and Apulian vessels conducted commercial activities on the coasts of Epirus and did not bother to sail up to Venice to load goods that could be directly obtained for cheaper prices from Ottoman territories.⁴⁴⁹ The establishment of the free ports of Trieste (1719), Fiume (1723), and Ancona (1732) created new challenges to Venice's Adriatic commerce. But long before that, Venice found itself unable to prevent ships of other nations from entering the Gulf in order to anchor in ports which were not under the Republic's control.

The Advantages of the Exploited

Central to this discussion are the ways in which a colonial empire develops and exploits economic resources. In our post-colonial era it has become nearly impossible to consider any colonial regime in terms that are not pejorative. Consequently, the historiography of past colonial empires tends to depict historical realities in black and white. Historians have difficulty conceiving a colonial regime, which by its very nature is exploitative, as also offering some advantages, not only for the dominating power but also for the colonial subjects. Could exploitation, especially by foreigners, exist alongside the well-being of the local subjects in the very same territory? At first glance this seems an absurdity, but is it really impossible? To note just one example: in 1648, Thomas Flangin, a lawyer from Corfu, left his entire estate, amounting to 171,716 ducats, to the Greek confraternity in Venice.⁴⁵⁰ How could a Corfiot lawyer amass such a fortune? Was it an exceptional case, or did 17th-century Corfu offer such opportunities to Venetian subjects on that island? The economic history of the *stato da mar* may serve as a test case for further studies around this question, which should be based on synchronic and diachronic comparisons.

XI. *Conclusions*

The Judicial Recipe for Longevity

The very fact that a relatively small state like Venice was somehow able to endure continuous and recurrent attacks by a much bigger and stronger power, which enjoyed huge resources of manpower and materials,

⁴⁴⁹ Bacchion, *Il dominio veneto su Corfù*, pp. 207–208.

⁴⁵⁰ Manoussacas, "The History of the Greek Confraternity," p. 329.

demands explanation. There is certainly no one single explanation, but a key element seems to be the unwritten pact that underlies Venice's relationship with its colonial subjects: to the loyal subjects (*fedeli nostri*) Venice promised "peace and justice" (real or mythical, both had their influence), whereas the colonies, for their part, were expected to provide "profit and honor" (*profitto e onore*). These two pairs of expressions are mentioned repeatedly in Venetian official documents, as well as in documents that are products of the ongoing negotiation between the Signory and its colonies.

"Peace" also implied internal peace, for Venice's central role as an arbitrator between local factions constituted a major contribution to stability in the Republic's overseas territories. This role was firmly connected to "justice," as reflected in artistic representations in which Venice is depicted as a female personification of *Giustizia*. Beyond myth, the Venetian judicial system was an essential instrument for ensuring internal peace and safeguarding local customs. Edward Muir has stressed the function of Venice's judicial system in offering Venetian subjects a space of maneuver and negotiation, or what he calls "continuous litigation," which institutionalized resistance in the field of legal practice.⁴⁵¹ For those subjects of the *stato da mar* who did not belong to the privileged groups, Venice often served as the only authority to which they could turn for redress against abuse of power or social injustice. Such was the case, for example, of the Istrian peasants who, in the early 18th century, lodged a complaint against a powerful Capodistrian magnate who had succeeded in organizing an illegal organization that exploited the woods in their vicinity (in which they had been traditionally employed) for a private enterprise of charcoal production.⁴⁵² The accessibility of the judicial system to all Venetian subjects was assured through the system of the itinerant colonial inspectors, and later by empowering the *provveditori generali* to act as a supreme judicial instance of appeal. As a matter of fact, the abundance of information about the abuse of power found in Venetian records can be considered a result of such accessibility. In return, the colonial subjects were ready to express their loyalty to Venice, to fight against its enemies, and, except for very few cases during the four centuries treated in this chapter, to refrain from revolting against its rule.

⁴⁵¹ Muir, "Was there Republicanism?"

⁴⁵² Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea*, pp. 294, 296. See also Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*, p. 217; Berengo, "Problemi economico-sociali," p. 510.

In Search of a Turning Point

Several important works on various provinces of the *stato da mar* during the last century of Venetian rule depict a rather lugubrious picture of the Venetian colonial administration. Time and again, the magistrates who ruled these territories expressed their frustration at being unable to impose law and order, as they understood these concepts, on local societies. In fact, Venice itself appears to have been slack in implementing its own laws regarding the administration of its empire. If this was the case in the administrative milieu itself, no wonder that colonial subjects found ways to evade the law, to avoid their fiscal and other obligations, to circumvent judicial decisions, and to use violence and terror on other inhabitants of their own country.⁴⁵³

The extent to which such phenomena were expressed in the different territories changes, of course, according to time and place. For example, in Cephalonia, the ability of the governors to exercise their authority seems to have been particularly limited, because of the existence of strong local (and often rival) families who dominated the social scene.⁴⁵⁴ Methods of organized violence, of *patti di famiglia* and of *fratellanza*, could be observed, though probably in relatively less violent forms, on Corfu and Zante as well.⁴⁵⁵ Venice was unable to alter these realities.

Was there a process of deterioration in the level of Venice's administration of the *stato da mar*, and, if so, can we detect a turning point from which such a deterioration can be observed? For the Ionian Islands, Alfredo Viggiano has suggested considering the early 1760s as such a turning point, a non-reversible crisis in Venice's authority resulting in a power vacuum in the islands, which was quickly filled by local powerful families.⁴⁵⁶ Yet the question remains whether these difficulties were really symptoms of a new process of colonial decline or, perhaps, only a worsening of a long-term chronic malady. Reading O'Connell's recent book on the *stato da mar* in the 15th century,⁴⁵⁷ one gets a similar impression, and, most

⁴⁵³ Alfredo Viggiano, "Venezia e le isole del Levante. Cultura politica e incombenze amministrative nel dominio da mar del XVIII secolo," *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 151 (1993), 753–95; Viggiano, *Lo specchio*, pp. 113–195; André Grasset Saint-Sauveur, *Voyage historique littéraire et pittoresque dans les isles et possessions ci-devant vénitiennes du Levant*, 3 vols (Paris, 1800); Miller, "The Ionian Islands," pp. 235–36; Paladini, 'Un caos che spaventa,' p. 13.

⁴⁵⁴ Viggiano, "Venezia e le isole del Levante," p. 781.

⁴⁵⁵ Folin, "Spunti," pp. 344–45.

⁴⁵⁶ Viggiano, *Lo specchio*, p. 139.

⁴⁵⁷ O'Connell, *Men of Empire*.

strikingly, one encounters also similar techniques, such as the use of the judicial mechanism of appeal to reverse decisions of Venetian governors in the colonies, direct petitions to Venice to gain bureaucratic benefices after failing to obtain them from the local governor, etc. Even the local clan organization in the Cretan area of Sfakia in the early 16th century comes to mind as something similar to the *patti di famiglia* of 18th-century Cephalonia. Ventura's thesis regarding the crisis of Venetian administration of justice in the 16th century also bears relevance to this case.

Apart from the fact that we are dealing with periods separated by 200 to 300 years, we are hampered in our ability to tackle this question because we are rarely able to quantify our impressions. An attempt in this direction was made by Marco Folin, who noted that the number of Greeks appointed as chancellors in the Ionian Islands during the years of the Cretan War was considerably lower than about a century later, which could indicate that the norm reserving the office of chancellor in the colonies for Venetian citizens was still largely observed in the mid-17th century. Moreover, only a handful of the 17th-century chancellors took the oath of fidelity in front of the *Provveditore Generale da Mar*, and not in Venice as required, whereas a century later (a period of peace), the great majority of chancellors did not bother to do it in Venice. No less interesting is Folin's analysis of the social extraction of the 18th-century chancellors, most of whom were of modest social background, such as descendents of former Venetian *ministri* who served on these islands and married local women, or of refugees from the Morea, who used the office as a means for social ascent (i.e., to become members of the local urban councils). Folin has suggested that the increasing number of local Greek chancellors in the Ionian Islands was a response to the growing Venetian need to find mediators with the foci of power in local society.⁴⁵⁸

Other indications of disintegration, in addition to the widening phenomenon of direct economic contacts between the overseas dominions and foreign countries, were the presence of foreign consulates in Venice's colonies and the use of foreign citizenship by the Republic's subjects to avoid certain obligations, as witnessed in the Ionian Islands.⁴⁵⁹ The Venetian authorities were preoccupied by the development of a quasi-extra-territorial jurisdiction at the expense of its own territorial sovereignty.

⁴⁵⁸ Folin, "Spunti," pp. 338–342, 346.

⁴⁵⁹ Victor Mallia-Milanes, "Il consolato maltese a Zante e i rapporti tra Venezia e l'Ordine di San Giovanni," in Massimo Costantini, ed., *Il Mediterraneo centro-orientale tra vecchie e nuove egemonie* (Rome, 1998); For the other consulates, see above, pp. 234–235.

Similarly, during the second half of the 18th century, a widespread habit of wearing uniforms of foreign armies, such as of the Papal State, Naples, Austria, or Russia, also served as a sort of immunity from Venetian justice.⁴⁶⁰ These findings may inspire further investigation of reflections in the *stato da mar* of what is generally conceived to be a slow disintegration of the Republic's ruling mechanisms during the last decades of its existence. In this case too, a comparative approach, taking into consideration the experience of other colonial empires, would certainly be useful.

The Advantage of Weakness

Granting autonomy to local communities, particularly urban communities, was meant to serve as a means of assuring political stability, but it also reflected the limits of Venice's ability to control its overseas territories. In the long run, the mechanism of negotiation with local communities through the *capitoli* reinforced, by its very nature, the local elements and therefore weakened Venice's ability to rule. Venice simply could not afford to refuse to make concessions when presented with a list of requests by representatives of its loyal subjects. Such concessions accumulated over the course of time, resulting in an ever-widening scale of self rule. In territories that remained under Venetian rule, the longevity of the *stato da mar* inevitably resulted in greater autonomy enjoyed by local elites. With the passing of time, two patterns of self rule—one legitimate and institutionalized and the other (partly overlapping with the former) illegal and informal but nevertheless effective—came to regulate the lives of Venetian subjects in the Republic's overseas colonies. The survival of the *stato da mar* up to the late 18th century may have hinged on this very duality.

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⁴⁶⁰ Viggiano, "Venezia e la chiesa greca," pp. 28–30.

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THE VENETIAN ECONOMY

Luciano Pezzolo

This essay presents the structures of Venice's urban economy in the phases of success, resistance, and decline that characterized its history between the 15th and 18th centuries and looks at how a structure based on long-distance commerce changed into a system based on landed revenues and consumption. The examination of specific economic relations between the capital and its dominions is left to other contributions in this volume.

Even a cursory glance at the studies of Venetian economic history brings us face to face with some of the great scholars of international historiography. Indeed, Venice was of great interest to many 20th-century scholars, both Italian and foreign, who examined the most important issues in economic history. Venetian historiography obviously reflects more general cultural tendencies. During the 19th century, the Republic of St Mark was studied above all with regard to political or cultural questions. The affirmation of the national State as a principal historical actor led historians to an interest in the rise and fall of States in the context of international political competition. Thus the *Serenissima* was approached as a great Mediterranean power that had achieved a position of preeminence until the 16th century, and later followed a path of inevitable decline finally completed by the Napoleonic armies in 1797. Venice was a victim of the negative view that regarded the entire Mediterranean, according to which, after the rise of the Ottomans and the great discoveries culminating in Columbus's enterprise in America, the whole region rapidly entered into a dramatic and irreversable crisis caused by the emergence of the Atlantic powers (Holland, France, and England). According to the German historian Wilhelm Heyd, the arrival of the Portuguese in India in 1498 and the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 were the two final events in a process that brought about the decline of the Mediterranean.¹ In 1823, the Venetian intellectual Luigi Casarini argued that Venice, so distant from routes

¹ Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen Age*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1886), pp. 508–52.

toward the East and the Americas, "was, after such a revolution, no longer capable of keeping for itself the monopoly on Oriental goods."²

However, the First World War and the upheavals it provoked forced many to question what had previously been taken for granted, including, among other things, the preeminence of political history. Questions of economic history began to interest an ever larger group of scholars, particularly during the economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s. The movement of historiographical renewal culminated in the 1929 foundation of the French journal *Annales* proposed a decisive turn toward economic and social history. In Italy, one of the founding fathers of economic history, Gino Luzzatto (1878–1964), was actually a scholar of Venetian history and was the first to do systematic research on the people and structures of the economic past. Beside Luzzatto, one must also mention the American historian Frederic C. Lane (1900–84), who began his illustrious career of Venetian scholarship with a study on the *Arsenale* and fleet published in 1934, followed in 1944 by a monograph on a 15th-century merchant and numerous works on the financial and commercial world of the city on the lagoon. It must also be noted that Fernand Braudel (1902–85), one of the principal protagonists of historiographical renewal in the 20th century, contributed to placing the Venetian economy in the broader context of Mediterranean history and strongly influenced an intrepid group of researchers in their studies on the *Serenissima*.

The scholarly interest focused mainly on Venice's golden centuries, the period extending from the 11th century to the 15th that witnessed the sailors, shipbuilders, and merchants of the *Serenissima* as protagonists of the great commercial traffic between East and West. In these stories of merchants and entrepreneurs, scholars sought the origins of the entrepreneurial spirit and, ultimately, the elements of the birth of capitalism and modernity. In the early Renaissance, Venice and Florence competed for the title of Birthplace of Capitalism and of the rationality, whether economic or political, of the Western Man.

Commercial Success

Venice was one of the largest metropolises of medieval Europe, drawing its vitality from long-distance commerce but, at the same time, functioning as a great center of production and consumption, as noted in Table 1.

² Luigi Casarini, *Sulla origine, ingrandimento e decadenza del commercio di Venezia e sui mezzi che nella presente di lei situazione praticare potrebbero per impedirne la minacciata rovina* (Venice, 1823), pp. 30–31.

Table 1. Venice's population and its ranking among the largest cities in Italy and Europe. Index: mean 1540–86=100.

	Inhabitants	Index	Ranking in Italy	Ranking in Europe
1300*	110000	73	2	
1363*	65228	44		
1400*	85000	57	2	3
1509*	103500	69	2	3
1540	129971	87		
1552	158069	105		
1555	159467	106		
1563	168627	113		
1581	134871	90		
1586	148097	99		
1607*+	188970	126	2	5
1624	141625	95		
1633	102243	68		
1642	120307	80		
1655+	158772	106		
1696	137867	92	2	7
1740	147470	98		
1761	148576	99		9
1766	140256	94		
1771	138700	93		
1780	140286	94		
1784	139095	93		
1790	137603	92		
1795	137240	92	3	14

* Estimate

+ Data uncertain

Sources: Benjamin Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis. Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth Century Depression* (New Haven, 1976), Appendix 7; Richard T. Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p. 22; Daniele Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia dalla fine del secolo XVI alla caduta della Repubblica* (Padua, 1954), p. 59; Andrea Zannini, "Un censimento inedito del primo Seicento e la crisi demografica ed economica di Venezia," *Studi veneziani* 26 (1993), 108; Paolo Malanima, "Italian Cities 1300–1800. A Quantitative Approach," *Rivista di storia economica* 14 (1998), Appendix; Jean Georgelin, *Venise au siècle des lumières* (Paris, 1978), p. 189. For comparison to other states in Europe, see Paul Bairoch, Jean Batou, and Pierre Chèvre, *La population des villes européennes de 800 à 1850* (Geneva, 1988), pp. 276–80.

These data, which should be considered as indicative of a general trend, reflect the ambiguity of Venice's economic history, an ambiguity which neither the rise and fall of a great power nor the overall stability of the population during the early modern period can explain. Certainly, the effects of the Black Death in the mid-14th century were significant, and it took several decades to recover from the demographic losses inflicted by such a catastrophe. Nevertheless, the long-term fluctuations are not

significant, with the exception of the one caused by the plague of 1630. Venice's stability is even more marked from the perspective of its ranking with respect to other Italian cities, behind only Naples (and Rome at the end of the 18th century). For the entire period under consideration, the city on the lagoon remained a fundamental pillar of the peninsula's economic system and fully participated in its different phases. It is worthwhile, though, to underline the importance of a comparison of Venice within the wider European context, which demonstrates that Venice, like the rest of the Mediterranean area, progressively lost ground in the early modern period. The changes that occurred on the continent placed the *Serenissima* in a peripheral position, despite its demographic consistency. Thus, we have resistance on one side and decline on the other. They are the two apparently opposing factors which, in the context of Venetian history, become complementary and ultimately provide the interpretative key for its economy.

A long historiographical tradition has explained the late medieval economic success of Venice and, more generally, Italy as a result of its favorable geographic position connecting European markets with the East, a particularly Italian entrepreneurial spirit, a superior technological skill in commercial management and navigation, and, consequently, in the higher productivity of its capital. The Italian comparative advantage also laid in the continuity of commercial relations with the more advanced Near East, which had been maintained even during the less dynamic periods of the early Middle Ages. Constant relations had allowed for a flourishing exchange of technical know-how which ultimately gave Italians the edge. In fact, the western economic recovery after the 11th century further augmented the intermediary function of the peninsula's ports. Growing European demand for spices, dying materials, silk, and cotton, and, on the part of the East, the continuous need for woolen cloths, slaves, and, above all, precious metals provided constant fuel for the Italian economy. However, it must be underlined that the achievement of a favorable position in the eastern Mediterranean was also a product of military force. The political and economic privileges enjoyed in Levantine ports by Venetian and Genoese merchants—traditionally the main competitors—reflected power relations which, at least until the arrival of the Ottomans, were maintained by their respective fleets and campaigns of piracy.³ Beyond connecting Levantine and European markets, Venetian and Genoese

³ Irene B. Katele, "Piracy in the Venetian State: The Dilemma of Maritime Defence in the Fourteenth Century," *Speculum* 63 (1988), 865–89.

vessels provided efficient services between the various Levantine cities, just as the English and Dutch were to do later.

Tensions between the two greatest Italian naval powers led to numerous clashes and conflicts, culminating in the war of Chioggia (1378–81), which saw Genoa penetrate the Venetian lagoon and seriously threaten Venetian survival. However, the *Serenissima* was able to avoid total ruin and eventually reacquired military supremacy over its rival. It is plausible that the shifting of Genoese interests from the eastern Mediterranean towards western markets was in part caused by the constant pressure exerted by the Venetians, in addition to the recurrent Mongol and Ottoman threats. From the 13th century, unlike Genoa, Venice constructed an almost continuous chain of fortifications from the northern Adriatic to the Aegean in order to offer permanent protection to ships leaving the city of St Mark.⁴ Starting in the mid-14th century, the government organized a system of convoys (the so-called *mude*) composed of armed vessels (the *galee grosse*) built in the *Arsenale* and thus property of the state, and then farmed them out to merchants. The most precious goods were transported on these convoys at rather high costs, but with very low insurance rates.⁵ Starting in the mid-15th century, Venetian merchants were able to achieve a preminent position in the most important Levantine ports and thus dominate their other Italian competitors.⁶

Naturally, the advantages of a partial monopoly on the spice trade were considerable. It has been estimated that profits deriving from overseas trade reached 40 per cent and were at times even higher.⁷ That said, it is still plausible to argue that a merchant's net profit was in the range of 10–20 per cent. If such ample profit margins attracted investors from different groups within the Venetian population, which might participate in these overseas enterprises even with small sums of money, for the government, long-distance commerce constituted the principal source of fiscal revenues. Customs dues and the taxation on trade and consumption contributed a huge part of government income and made Venice one of the great powers of medieval Europe.

⁴ John Dotson, "Venice, Genoa and Control of the Seas in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in John B. Hattendorf and Richard W. Unger, eds., *War and Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 135.

⁵ Frederic C. Lane, *Navires et constructeurs à Venise pendant la Renaissance* (Paris, 1965), pp. 22–23.

⁶ Eliyahu Ashtor, "The Venetian Supremacy in Levantine Trade: Monopoly or Pre-Colonialism?" *Journal of European Economic History* 3 (1974), 5–53.

⁷ Eliyahu Ashtor, "Profits from Trade with the Levant in the Fifteenth Century," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 37 (1975), 268.

It is useful to consider the benefits Venice enjoyed in the eastern Mediterranean compared to its competitors using the concept of transaction costs. These are the costs that regard a particular exchange, in this case of commercial nature. The actors must accept some burdens which, beyond those of production, concern the acquisition of information, eventual costs for enforcing contracts and rules, security, transport, and the like.⁸

The centuries-long presence of Venetian merchants in the trading centers of the Near East had allowed for an accumulation of knowledge and expertise, which over time was transformed into a consistent competitive advantage with respect to their competitors. Several observations of merchants from Lyon in the first half of the 16th century effectively summed up the question. The Italian merchants disposed of technical and commercial instruments, experience, a knowledge of Levantine markets, and an ability to manage money. If Frenchmen had borrowed from Venetians or Italians, they generally had to pay interests of 30–40 per cent at Aigues-Mortes. Moreover, the Italians residing in Levantine *fondaci* knew exactly when to purchase spices. Also, the voyage was of shorter duration between Venice and the East. The result was that spices coming from Venice cost 20 per cent less than those imported directly by the merchants of Languedoc.⁹ The ability to take advantage of opportunities offered by the market, the control of or, at least, the skilled manipulation of international financial networks, and the exploitation of efficient vessels were the tools that made the Venetians the protagonists of trade between the Near East and Europe.

The position the merchants of the *Serenissima* achieved permitted a notable reduction in transaction costs and protection costs, forcing their competitors, in contrast, to sustain higher ones. Relying particularly on Venetian history, Frederic Lane underlined that the costs of protection must be considered in and of themselves when calculating total production costs: "Different enterprises competing in the same market often pay different costs of protection, perhaps as tariffs, or bribes, perhaps in some other form. The difference between the protection costs forms one element in the income of the enterprise enjoying the lower protection

⁸ Douglass C. North, "Institutions, Transaction Costs and Economic Growth," *Economic Inquiry* 25 (1987), 383–99.

⁹ Richard Gascon, *Grand commerce et vie urbaine au XVI^e siècle. Lyon et ses marchands (environs de 1520—environs de 1580)*, 2 vols (Paris, 1971), 1:84.

cost."¹⁰ The component of defense represented a fundamental element in maritime trade. Thus, uncertainties about the pirates who infested Mediterranean waters were added to those of the climate, though the former were far more worrying. Not by chance, at the beginning of the 14th century, the great Venetian galleys counted a minimum of 30 crossbowmen in a crew of 180 men; and in the 15th century a 250-ton vessel would carry 20 sailors, eight servants, and at least 4 crossbowmen.¹¹

Though it is difficult to quantify the difference between the costs incurred by the Venetians compared to those of their competitors, it is plausible to argue that, at least until the 15th century, the former enjoyed lower costs, allowing them to benefit from a revenue of protection (that is to say, the differential between the different costs). The 20 per cent difference in price between the spices the Venetians imported and those sold by French merchants may rightly be considered as a burden attributable to higher protection and transaction costs. Considering that insurance rates for galleys on the Venice–Alexandria route in times of peace did not exceed 2 per cent,¹² and in the 1440s insurance rates on the Flanders route were in the range of 4 per cent, while Florentines paid 7 per cent for state ships and 10–12 per cent for private vessels,¹³ this difference represented a protection revenue all to the Venetians' advantage. The benefits that were ensured to their operators were the result of a long and uncertain struggle that characterized the projection of Venetian power in the eastern Mediterranean.

The Venetian government was the first to maintain a permanent fleet (from the beginning of the 14th century) whose primary responsibility was patrolling the Adriatic Sea. Although it was not possible to fully secure these waters, due to the technological limitations of the era, it is nonetheless significant that the Venetian rulers had decided to employ military

¹⁰ Frederic C. Lane, "National Wealth and Protection Costs," in Lane, *Venice and History* (Baltimore, 1966), p. 374.

¹¹ Bernard Doumerc, "La difesa dell'impero," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 3 (1997): *La formazione dello stato patrizio*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi, Giorgio Cracco, and Alberto Tenenti, p. 240; Frederic C. Lane, "The Crossbow in the Nautical Revolution of the Middle Ages," in Benjamin G. Kohl, and Reinhold C. Mueller, eds., *Studies in Venetian Social and Economic History* (London, 1987), p. 165.

¹² Karin Nehlsen von Stryk, *Die venetianische Seevericherung im 15. Jahrhundert* (Ebel-sbach, 1986), Appendix.

¹³ Bernard Doumerc, "Le galere da mercato," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 12 (1991): *Il mare*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, p. 374.

force on a regular basis in order to protect the economic interests of their merchants.

Another response to the uncertainties of overseas commercial enterprises came, as previously mentioned, in the form of state convoys, which were used from around the mid-14th century to the beginning of the 1500s. The most precious goods were transported on *galee grosse* (great galleys), capable both of defending themselves and protecting each other. A flotilla of three or four such galleys could provide the notable fighting force of 600–800 men, since, in addition to crossbowmen and, after 1486, archibusers, the rowers themselves could also fight.¹⁴ Such a convoy was certainly not easy prey for pirates. Moreover, the galley was the fastest of all the longships. A characteristic of this convoy system was its regularity: departures and, if possible, arrivals were marked by a calendar that determined and made predictable the rhythms of supply and demand on the Venetian marketplace. As the galleys heading for the Levant absorbed currency and precious metals, making the city cash-poor, it was easily imaginable that the cost of money was destined to rise. At their arrival, then, the supply of liquidity brought about a corresponding fall in the cost of capital.¹⁵ Galley service as a crossbowman also offered young patricians the chance to get accustomed to life at sea and begin the journey that would eventually lead them to become merchants themselves. Finally, the crews, composed of free men (as opposed to slaves), could provide a well-trained military force in wartime to serve in the fleet.

Research on the regular state convoy system can boast a long tradition, thanks above all to the official documentation produced by the government. This has allowed us to track both the number of voyages made and the prices patricians—who enjoyed the right to rent merchant galleys—paid to use these ships.¹⁶ The sums collected at the auctions of galleys have been considered a good indicator of the economic fluctuations, since they reflected the investors' profit expectations. It was possible that investors

¹⁴ Lane, *Navires et constructeurs*, pp. 21–22.

¹⁵ Reinhold C. Mueller, "Chome l'ucciello di passaggio': la demande saisonnière des espèces et le marché des changes à Venise au Moyen Age," in John Day, ed., *Etudes d'histoire monétaire* (Lille, 1984), pp. 195–219.

¹⁶ Freddy Thiriet, "Quelques observations sur le trafic des galées vénitiennes d'après les chiffres des incanti (XIV^e–XV^e siècles)," in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, vol. 3 (Milan, 1962), pp. 495–522; Doris Stöckly, *Le système de l'Incanto des galées du marché à Venise (fin XIII^e–milieu XV^e siècle)* (Leiden, 1995); Claire Judde de Larivière, *Naviguer, commercer, gouverner. Économie maritime et pouvoirs à Venise (XV^e–XVI^e siècles)* (Leiden, 2008).

might gather more than 20,000 ducats to rent a galley. As to the number of active ships, the peak was reached in the 15th century, with 180 galleys in circulation in the 1430s and 1440s. Successively, some routes were abandoned (such as those for the Balkans), and other voyages occurred less frequently, though in some cases commercial exchange intensified in the late 15th century (the routes for Aigues Mortes, Valencia, and the Barbary states).¹⁷ But by the 16th century only a few galleys annually embarked for the traditional ports of Alexandria and Beirut. In 1569 the last state convoy was prepared for Beirut; from that moment, the system which had endured for centuries and represented one of the pillars of Venetian overseas commerce, was abandoned.

The advantages the galley system offered to Venetian merchants in the 1400s were destined to vanish in the next century. Despite government subsidies offered to contractors, management costs of the convoys ended up being quite burdensome, while roundships were able to transport goods at lower prices. Moreover, their vast employment of artillery made the roundships easy to defend, while the galleys displayed serious limits in their capacity to carry adequate weapons for the new forms of naval warfare. Moreover, it would be wrong to see the diminishing activity of the merchant galleys as a sign of crisis in Venetian maritime commerce. Silk, spices, and precious metals previously transported by the galleys now found a place in the capacious holds of the great sailing ships. In truth, in terms of tonnage, these vessels had always constituted a great majority of the mercantile fleet. It has been estimated that in the mid-15th century, the merchant galleys amounted to 3000–3500 tons, while there were 300 ships that exceeded 120 tons each. Roughly one century later, the fleet had 37 ships of more than 240 tons, 11 of which had a tonnage between 600 and 900 tons.¹⁸ However, the disappearance of the merchant galley did notably reduce the predictability of the market. Since the schedule of departures and arrivals in Venice determined the flow of supply and demand, the eclipse of the galleys meant that the arrival of even a single vessel was enough to provoke strong fluctuations in the marketplace.

¹⁷ Igual Luis, David, "Las galeras mercantiles venecianas y el puerto de Valencia (1391–1534)," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 24 (1994), 179–99.

¹⁸ Gino Luzzatto, "Navigazione di linea e navigazione libera nelle grandi città marinare del Medio Evo," in Luzzatto, *Studi di storia economica veneziana* (Padua, 1954), p. 55; Lane, *Navires et constructeurs*, p. 228.

Trade between Growth and Change

Despite the lack of quantitative data, most scholars claim that in the 15th and 16th centuries Venice maintained, and possibly reinforced, its pre-eminent role in commercial exchange between the West and the Levant. Between 1414 and 1431, the galleys heading for Beirut and Alexandria carried merchandise and precious metals of an annual value of 12 tons of silver, to which were added another five tons in the *cocche* (round transport ships) destined for Syria. The average annual investment in the galleys for Syria alone amounted to 17 tons in the two decades between 1449 and 1468. It could be argued, though based on information that are not always coherent, that towards the end of the 15th century the exchange value between Venice and the Levant was in the range of 25 tons of silver (with a probable increase compared to the beginning of the century). In 1558–60, the Venetian representative in Constantinople claimed the overall value of this trade to be roughly 125 tons of silver. At the end of the century, Venetian commerce in Aleppo alone, one of the most important Levantine markets, amounted to more than 50 tons of silver, while the English and French took equal parts of a further 25 tons.¹⁹ The data, albeit rough, indicate that trade between the West and the Levant grew notably despite the demographic stagnation in 15th-century Europe. It is likely that continental demand was sustained by the rather elevated real incomes that allowed for an increase in demand for luxury goods. In the 16th century, though, despite the fall in real incomes, demand was sustained by a significant demographic growth together with the fall in the real prices of eastern spices. In any case, the expansion of the spice market developed through Venice's intermediary role. Compared to the previous century, though, beginning in the 1570s Venice was joined in the

¹⁹ The data that I converted into silver for the 15th century are taken from Alan M. Stahl, "European Minting and the Balance of Payments with the Islamic World in the Later Middle Ages," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico, secc. XIII–XVIII*, 2 vols (Florence, 2007), 2:895–96; Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 470–78; Francisco J. Apellániz, "Crise financière et rapports internationaux en Méditerranée: la faillite des corporations européennes dans le sultanat mamelouk (1450–1517)," in Cavaciocchi, ed., *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico*, 2:621–22; and for the 16th century, see Bruno Simon, "Contribution à l'étude du commerce vénitien dans l'empire ottoman au milieu du XVI^e siècle (1558–1560)," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome* 96 (1984), 978; and Michel Fontenay, "Le commerce des Occidentaux dans les échelles du Levant au XVII^e siècle," in Cavaciocchi, ed., *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico*, 2:524.

Mediterranean by a group of fearsome competitors, primarily the French, Dutch, and English.

The consistency and even the likely growth in Venetian long-distance trade was not weakened by the opening of the route around the Cape of Good Hope. True, after the arrival of Portuguese vessels full of eastern spices, the flow of trade via the Levant witnessed a dramatic interruption, but the crisis had more to do with the chaotic situation in the Arabian peninsula.²⁰ After a short time, the Venetians resumed importing precious spices from eastern Mediterranean ports. News arriving from Alexandria in the early 1530s spoke of an abundance of spices.²¹ It is worth noting that from 1 October 1543 to 31 July 1544 in Lyon arrived 391 bundles of Venetian spices compared to only 66 from Antwerp, which constituted the distribution center for Portuguese spices destined for central Europe. Thus it seems that, at least from the vantage point of Lyon, Portuguese competition did not provoke serious losses and was rather limited from the 1540s on.²² The emergence of a duopoly, in any case, had the effect of lowering the real price of spices and, in the last analysis, benefitting the European consumer.²³

At least until the end of the 16th century, Levantine ports continued to provide encouraging signs for Venetian businessmen. In Aleppo as well as in Alexandria, trade volume remained quite high. Raw spices, silk, and cotton were exchanged for western products (wool fabrics, leather goods, metals, glass products, alum, silver, and gold). According to some estimates, in the early 1590s the Venetians invested several million ducats, and in 1596–99 they still controlled two-thirds of transit commerce. A decade later, this share would be cut in half, though it still constituted a relevant portion of the overall trade. Within a few years, the Venetian presence contracted to such a point that in the period 1612–15 its share of the trade volume had fallen to a mere 12 per cent; in Alexandria the situation was certainly no better.²⁴ Leaving the analysis of the causes of

²⁰ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Birth-Pangs of Portuguese Asia: Revisiting the Fateful 'Long Decade' 1498–1509," *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007), 272–73.

²¹ Sanudo, Marin, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1903), vol. 56, col. 569; and vol. 57, cols 262, 267, 463.

²² Gascon, *Grand commerce*, p. 89.

²³ O'Rourke, Kevin H., and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Did Vasco da Gama Matter for European Markets?" *Economic History Review* 62 (2009), 655–84.

²⁴ Ugo Tucci, "Un ciclo di affari commerciali in Siria (1579–1581)," in Tucci, *Mercanti, navi, monete nel Cinquecento veneziano* (Bologna, 1981), pp. 95–143; Fontenay, "Le commerce des Occidentaux," p. 524; Jonathan I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585–1740* (Oxford, 1989), p. 55; Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies. The Structural*

decline for the following pages, let us for the moment simply stress that the structure of European imports from Aleppo changed significantly between the late 16th and the beginning of the 17th century. While spices had previously accounted for the majority of trade towards the west, the next century witnessed the disappearance of such products and the growing importance of raw silk, mainly coming from Persia. In the space of a few decades, between 1560 and 1621, English imports rose from a little less than 12,000 to more than 117,000 pounds;²⁵ but what is more important is that such a movement occurred without the participation of Venetian intermediaries, contrary to prior custom.

In addition to the western manufactures the Venetians exported to the Levant, precious metals also occupied an important place in this trade. Gold and, above all, silver were constantly in demand from Persia, India, and especially China. The scarcity of silver ensured that its values in the East were quite favorable with respect to gold: whereas the gold-silver ratio tended to gravitate around 1:11 in 15th- and 16th-century Europe, in China it was roughly 1:7.²⁶ That meant that precious metals served not only to balance the commercial deficit between West and East but also represented an enormous source of financial gain for European exporters. Roughly up to the 1530s, that is, before the arrival of large quantities of American silver, Europeans supplied themselves with gold from Africa and silver from the mines of central Europe. A notable part of the production of the mines in southern Germany and Bohemia was destined for Antwerp and Venice, where German merchants purchased raw Syrian silk for their corduroy manufactures, in addition to traditional eastern products. Technological innovations that had been developed in the second half of the 15th century allowed for a consistent increase in European silver production, thus sustaining the increment of imports from the eastern Mediterranean through Venice. It was certainly not by chance that in the 1490s precious metals transported by Venetian ships represented an average of 60 per cent of the value of their loads.²⁷

Crisis in the European-Asian Trade in the Early Seventeenth Century (Copenhagen, 1972), pp. 175–85.

²⁵ Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558–1713* (Oxford, 2011), p. 68.

²⁶ Luciano Pezzolo, "Stato, prezzi e moneta," in Alessandro Barbero, ed., *Storia d'Europa e del Mediterraneo*, vol. 10: *Ambiente, popolazione, società* (Rome, 2009), pp. 290–91.

²⁷ John H. Munro, "The Monetary Origins of the 'Price Revolution': South German Silver Mining, Merchant Banking, and Venetian Commerce, 1470–1540," in Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Giráldez, and Richard Von Glahn, eds., *Global Connections and Monetary History*,

The 16th century witnessed a change in the social profile of the protagonists of Venetian long-distance commerce. Until mid-century, people who embarked on the galleys, lived in the *fondaci*, and traded in the great marketplaces of southern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean were largely patricians. The figure of Andrea Barbarigo can rightly be taken as representative of the 15th-century Venetian patrician, involved from his youth in the search for profit through commerce.²⁸ In the space of only a few generations, however, most of the patricians would shed the austere garb of the merchant and choose instead the comfortable life of the landed aristocracy. Throughout the 16th century, in fact, there was a huge wave of Venetian investments in the *terraferma*. The phenomenon had already manifested itself in the previous century, but in the 16th century it assumed more significant proportions. These investments first regarded areas closer to the lagoon (the regions of Padua, Treviso, and the southwestern part of the Friuli) and eventually penetrated the regions around Vicenza and south of Verona.²⁹ A long historiographical tradition has accused the Venetian patriciate of having betrayed its mercantile vocation in order to enjoy the easy revenues of a landed income, thus causing the decline of the great maritime republic. However, numerous elements justify and legitimize the patriciate's choices. First, the 16th century was characterized by a marked increase in food prices, which consequently made agrarian production particularly profitable. Since the rates of return to agriculture were close to those to commerce, land acquisition was considered an excellent investment.³⁰ Second, the availability of land, facilitated by the political control of the hinterland, represented a fundamental tool in ensuring the patrimonial transmission, which was becoming a particular concern for 16th-century nobles. Third, in Renaissance Venice there

1470–1800 (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 1–34; John H. Munro, "South German Silver, European Textiles, and Venetian Trade with the Levant and Ottoman Empire, c. 1370 to c. 1720: A Non-Mercantilistic Approach to the Balance of Payments Problem," in Cavaciocchi, ed., *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico*, 2:905–60; Frederic C. Lane, "Exportations vénitienes d'or et d'argent de 1200 à 1450," in Day, ed., *Etudes d'histoire monétaire*, pp. 29–48; Stahl, "European Minting," pp. 889–904.

²⁸ Frederic C. Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice, 1418–1449* (Baltimore, 1944).

²⁹ Gian Maria Varanini, "Proprietà fondiaria e agricoltura," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 5 (1985): *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 807–79; Daniele Beltrami, *La penetrazione economica dei veneziani in terraferma. Forze di lavoro e proprietà fondiaria nella campagne venete dei secoli XVII e XVIII* (Venice, 1961).

³⁰ Richard T. Rapp, "Real Estate and Rational Investment in Early Modern Venice," *Journal of European Economic History* 8 (1979), 269–90; Luciano Pezzolo, "Sistema di valori e attività economica a Venezia, 1530–1630," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *L'impresa. Industria, commercio, banca, secc. XIII–XVIII* (Florence, 1991), pp. 981–88.

was an increasing belief that agriculture could constitute an even nobler activity than commerce.³¹ That does not mean, however, that the Venetians abandoned commerce; it was only patrician merchant who became far rarer. Replacing the patricians were Venetians whom we might consider the “middle class,” but they were not the only ones. A myriad of more modest figures with origins in the *terraferma* and Jews from both Venice and its colonies conducted business under the flag of St Mark. It seems as though the norm that limited overseas commerce to the patriciate and other privileged citizens was overtaken by the contingencies of a more complex and composite reality.³² Thus, the Venetian mercantile world was transformed in its social components and, to a certain extent, in its cultural ones. The city embraced new commercial protagonists by giving them the possibility of freely conducting their business without any particular limits or constraints. Unlike what occurred in Danzig and Lubeck,³³ Venice represented a favorable environment for foreign merchants, whose property rights were fully guaranteed. It was likely this ability to attract foreigners that allowed Venice to maintain an important role in the network of information and relations that governed the international market, and consequently retain the city’s mercantile character.

Commerce had in fact been transformed: growing difficulties in the international markets brought about a narrowing of the Venetian social groups participating in the sector, and the chances for financial gain now offered themselves only to the shrewdest operators and those who could call on a vast information network. The profits offered by long-distance commerce were still high, but they were now reserved to a far smaller group. Though a modest number of patricians continued to attend to commercial affairs, it was the ruling class as a whole whose economic foundations were truly transformed. The crucial question, then, regards the relations between economic change and the decisions of economic policy made by the patriciate. If it is true that the Senate was the “board of directors” of the mercantile Republic, one must accurately analyze the consequences of the spread of extensive landownership among the

³¹ Ugo Tucci, “The Psychology of the Venetian Merchant,” in John R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 346–78.

³² Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople. Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2006), pp. 52–60.

³³ Erik Lindberg, “Club Goods and Inefficient Institutions: Why Danzig and Lübeck Failed in the Early Modern Period,” *Economic History Review* 62 (2009), 604–28.

patricians and the economic choices that were developed in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Public Finance

In order to sustain international trade, it was not enough to dispose of abundant merchandise and to have clever merchants; it was also necessary to support their activities with efficient crews and, above all, a system of protection. Such efforts, however, required great sums of money. The many wars Venice fought both at sea and on land exerted constant pressure on the city's finances. Annual state spending in terms of silver was probably in the range of 45–50 tons in the 15th century and rose to 100 tons in the 17th, a sum that was never again equalled during the next century.³⁴ The responses varied: increased taxation, recourse to extraordinary measures (sale of government offices and titles of nobility), and, above all, the public debt via both voluntary and forced loans.

The Venetian state drew its financial resources first of all from indirect taxes, that is to say, from those regarding the transit of goods, consumption, and economic activities in general.³⁵ The part of government revenues relative to its domain (property and land rentals, minting rights for coinage, etc.) was quite modest. In times of peace the budget covered ordinary expenses, such as the salaries of communal officials and overseas administration, those of the soldiers and sailors of the fleet, and the cost of maintaining the arsenal, as well as the interest payments on its loans. Yet peace was a condition which Renaissance Venice experienced only rarely. Open conflicts and patrol operations, brief but intense campaigns against rebellious coastal centers, protection from raids, and the need to escort commercial shipping all contributed to a quasi-perennial state of emergency and military mobilization. Until the eve of the War of Chioggia, however, Venetian finances were able to meet their needs with relative efficiency. After that point, however, began an era of burdensome wars which put a serious strain on the state budget.

³⁴ Luciano Pezzolo, *Una finanza d'ancien régime. La Repubblica veneta tra XV e XVIII secolo* (Naples, 2006), pp. 38–39.

³⁵ This section is based on the fundamental work of Gino Luzzatto, "Introduzione" to Gino Luzzatto, ed., *I prestiti pubblici della Repubblica di Venezia (sec. XIII–XV)* (Padua, 1929); and especially Reinhold C. Mueller, *The Venetian Money Market. Banks, Panics, and the Public Debt, 1200–1500* (Baltimore, 1997).

Renaissance Venice was one of the most developed financial markets in Europe, and even in the public sector it was unrivalled. Recourse to the public debt became an increasingly common choice in deficit spending. Yet it is necessary to underline the largely forced nature of these loans. Indeed, Venetians who were registered in the fiscal books were obliged to pay a sum in relation to their assessed wealth. In exchange, they received 5 per cent interest until the restitution of the loans. Moreover, those who held these state bonds were permitted to put them on the market. This possibility opened the door to the formation of a veritable market for shares in the state debt, subject to supply and demand and conducted with the presence of specialists and intermediaries. Naturally, the market offered attractive opportunities for speculation: a high demand for loans on the part of the government provoked an increase in the selling of these bonds among citizens, who were forced to find new liquidity with which to fund the new loans. A heightened supply contributed to lower market prices to the advantage of those who were able to purchase the devalued bonds. Then, when the negative period passed, prices of the securities rose again and could be sold with high profits. The growing state debt caused serious delays in interest payments, so that those claims came to be bought and sold.

This mechanism of state credit had important consequences in both economic and socio-political terms. First, government debt was a potent instrument for the redistribution of resources: interest was generally paid through indirect taxation, which by definition weighed more heavily on the lower strata of the population than on the well-to-do, who possessed notable shares of the debt. Yet it must be noted that a share of the taxes destined to make these interest payments was, in fact, sustained by foreign consumers who paid for products imported from Venice. A period of political expansion with its relative economic and financial benefits, then, permitted the government to bear the burden of debt without undue difficulties, as occurred until the end of the 14th century. Therefore, it is likely that the state debt enjoyed a wide social consensus, unlike what happened in Florence. During the following century, the situation worsened as a consequence of sustained military activity. Interest payments came to accumulate enormous delays, and the price of securities collapsed. In 1482 the entire debt was consolidated in the *Monte Vecchio* and a new series of titles was offered in the so-called *Monte Nuovo*. The various phases of the Italian Wars caused further problems, so that the government launched other series (the *Monte Nuovissimo*, the *Monte del sussidio*) for the purpose of collecting mainly forced loans.

Because of these continuous financial difficulties, the need emerged to make regular recourse to direct taxation, traditionally considered viable only in extraordinary circumstances. In 1463 the government imposed the *decima*, a semi-regular direct tax without obligations of restitution that targeted mostly real estate holdings both in Venice and in the *terraferma*, and the *tansa*, which hit other forms of income (trade, manufactures). Previously, various direct taxes had been decreed extraordinarily and largely had targeted those citizens not obliged to fund state loans, but beginning in the 1460s, this practice became ever more routine and institutionalized. The basis for collection remained the *estimo* (or *catasto*), a fiscal document that registered how much each individual might be taxed and which was supposed to be updated periodically so as to reflect fluctuations in wealth as they occurred. As for the *decima*, it was the taxpayer that declared his landed income, and only afterwards did the fiscal authority (the *Dieci savi alle decime in Rialto*) verify its accuracy. The amount of the *tansa*, in contrast, was determined with greater margins for personal judgment by a commission which considered the taxpayer's total income and expenses. The system would have functioned well if the *catasti* had not been updated as infrequently as they were: despite the legislation ordering a new evaluation every decade, the *reddecime* (as they were defined in the administrative language of the time) were carried out four times in the 16th century and only once in both the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the final period of the Italian Wars, between 1520 and 1530, crucial innovations were introduced in the debt system.³⁶ From this period, the government looked more and more frequently to the market of free capital and progressively abandoned the forced nature of loans. The new bonds, known as *Depositi in zecca* [Deposits in the mint], met with great success, thanks also to their attractive interest rates (14 per cent for life annuities and 6–7 per cent on long-term loans). The *Depositi in zecca* provided the majority of the liquidity to fight the Turkish wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. The Venetian government's excellent reputation was further strengthened with the great operation of debt payout which took place between 1577 and the early 17th century. Roughly 10 million ducats, equal to about four times the state's annual income, were paid back to the state's creditors. Thus a huge stream of money came to fill Venetian purses, from where it could be invested in the land or in private loans. The military conflicts of the 17th century, however, revived the financial needs

³⁶ For what follows, see Pezzolo, *Una finanza d'ancien régime*.

of the Republic. In addition to the *Depositi in zecca*, there were forced loans on guilds and ecclesiastical institutions, lotteries, the sale of offices and noble titles, and loans contracted abroad. During the 18th century, the evolution of debt reflected Venice's economic and political situation. The general stability of state revenues and the lack of heavy financial burdens allowed the government to maintain the debt at an acceptable level.

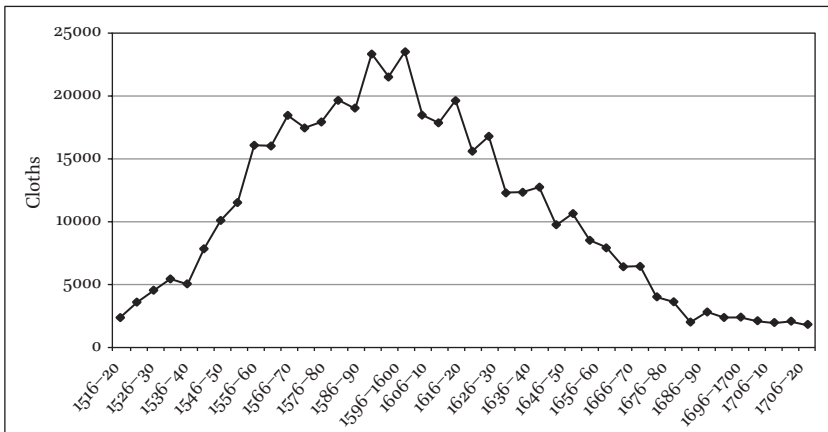
Though quantitative data are lacking, it is quite probable that the Venetian patriciate was the most important lender to the state, and thus to its own government institutions. The presence of significant shares of state securities is evident in numerous aristocratic patrimonies and dowry settlements. From the beginning of the 17th century, the patricians were joined more and more frequently by lay and ecclesiastical institutions and by other private citizens, particularly the Genoese. In 1787 Venetians held 79.7 per cent of the Venetian debt, foreigners had 19.5 per cent, and just 0.8 per cent was in the hands of subjects of the *terraferma*.³⁷ This image can be interpreted in different ways: on the one hand the internationalization of the debt might represent the high degree of trust in the Venetian debt; on the other, the phenomenon could be seen as a sign of difficulty for the Venetian patricians in satisfying the demands of the state. Third, the scarce participation of subjects from the dominion might show, yet again, the limits and nature of the Venetian territorial state: a state that was centered on Venice, unable to complete the process of forming a coherent and cohesive political entity with the rest of the territories under the flag of St Mark. However, the redistributive effects of revenues were significant: interest on the debt contributed to sustaining the 17th-century urban economy which was undergoing notable difficulties, and also provided resources to charitable institutions that sought to conserve social tranquility and the internal political equilibrium.

Manufactures

Though it was trade that characterized the Venetian Renaissance economy, the contribution of the industrial sector must not be underestimated. The recent historiography has underlined how Venice in the 15th and even more in the 16th century was one of the greatest industrial centers in Europe.³⁸ Wool and silk fabrics, glass beads and mirrors, leather

³⁷ Georgelin, *Venise au siècle des lumières*, p. 554.

³⁸ Salvatore, Ciriaco, "Industria e artigianato," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 5: *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 523–92; Ugo Tucci, "Venezia nel



Source: Walter Panciera, *L' "arte matrice." I lanifici della Repubblica di Venezia nei secoli XVII e XVIII* (Venice/Treviso, 1996), pp. 42-43.

Figure 5.1. Production of woolen cloths in Venice, 1516-1723 (quinquennial average).

goods, the products of goldsmiths, books and prints, and, naturally, ships were the principal categories of urban production. Since for so long the production trend of woolen cloths has been considered indicative of Venice's economic health, it might be helpful to represent its evolution in Figure 5.1, and discuss its validity and limits.

First, it must be noted that Figure 5.1 does not include the 15th-century data, which seem to be characterized by solid production levels. During the first half of the 15th century, 3000-5000 pieces were produced annually, while at the end of the century estimates are in the range of 6000 wool pieces. That means that the first decades of the 16th century represent a period of continuity, if not modest decline with respect to the preceding years. The roots of the sector's success, then, ought to be traced back to the 15th century. The workforce consisted in large part of immigrants from the Po Valley, and together with entrepreneurs of lower social extraction we find Venetian patricians and wealthy merchants.³⁹ The 16th-century ascendancy of Venetian textiles, largely exported to Levantine markets, occurred at the expense of comparable Florentine products, which had

Cinquecento: una città industriale?" in Vittore Branca and Carlo Ossola, eds., *Crisi e rinnovamento nell'autunno del rinascimento a Venezia* (Florence, 1991), pp. 61-83.

³⁹ Andrea Mozzato, "The Production of Woolens in Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Venice," in Paola Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre of the Old World. Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland, 1400-1800* (Toronto, 2006), pp. 73-107.

long been sold in those regions. The deterioration of relations between Florence and the Sublime Porte, internal political instability, and the reduction of imports of raw silk from Persia which counterbalanced the exports of woollen goods, significantly weakened the Florentine position in the Levant, though the Florentines continued to grow in the northern European market.⁴⁰ At the same time, the recovery of the spice trade in the eastern Mediterranean offered the Venetians ample possibilities of trade in exchange for woollen cloths. This ensured that, from the mid-16th century, the performance of the Venetian wool industry would be the exception to the general rule of the industry's difficulties, both in the Venetian *terraferma* and in the principal centers of the peninsula.

As for the raw materials used in the highest-quality production, the traditional supplies of famed English wool were now joined by Spanish merino wool, which by the end of the 16th century wholly replaced the former. It is certainly not by chance that merchants of Castilian wool left Florence for the lagoon at the beginning of the 17th century, attracted by the prospective of its lucrative trade. It must be said, however, that the supply channels were often heavily conditioned by the instability and tensions of international politics. In any case, it does not appear that the Venetian producers had to confront serious supply problems during the period of 16th-century expansion, as they were able to call on raw materials from both Spain and the Balkans.

The quantitative data, however, hide an important structural change with regard to the quality of the fabrics. Richard Rapp has underlined that the numbers conceal a profound transformation in qualitative terms. From the third quarter of the 16th century, the traditional production of heavy fabrics made of high-quality wool came to be combined with a production of lighter, medium-quality fabrics, which better met the tastes of Levantine demand and which from the middle of the century constituted the majority of the cloths produced in Venetian workshops.⁴¹ Thus, the Venetian wool boom was characterized by significant qualitative changes that, as we shall see, force us to question the accusations made against the urban guild system as an impediment to innovation. Even an in-depth

⁴⁰ Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, 2009), pp. 274–75.

⁴¹ Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline*, p. 158. See also Walter Panciera, *L'arte matrice. I lanifici della Repubblica di Venezia nei secoli XVII e XVIII* (Treviso, 1996).

analysis of the merely quantitative data, then, is insufficient in explaining the success and eventual decline of a productive sector.

The great importance of wool in international commerce, from the Middle Ages onward, and the availability of important historical data sets have long relegated the silk industry to the margins. Although adequate quantitative data are not available, it is beyond doubt that silk fabrics continued to conquer ever greater shares of the market. Owing particularly to the consistent presence of artisans from Lucca from the 14th century, Venice grew progressively as a center of silk manufacturing. It has been estimated that the number of looms rose from 800 in 1430 to 1000 in 1493 and by 1554 had reached 2400.⁴²

Up to the mid-15th century, Venetian merchants got their raw silk supplies in the ports of the Black Sea. But after the fall of Constantinople, the provisioning areas shifted first to Damascus and then to Aleppo. Between the 15th and 16th centuries, the galleys imported an annual average of 75,000 pounds from Beirut, while between 1590 and 1604 the amount would climb to 362,500 pounds. It must be said, however, that a good portion of the imported silk was re-exported to other centers, mainly Italian ones. As in the case of wool production, the imports of raw silk seem to follow the same trend, reaching their peak in the first years of the 17th century and then diminishing drastically afterwards.⁴³ Still, Venice diversified its supply lines, from Spain to southern Italy, and in this case as well showed a capacity of adapting itself according to market changes. Silk cloths productions were diversified by not only targeting traditional products for the wealthy elite but also producing thinner fabrics for the growing demand of the middle classes.⁴⁴

Nor did Venetian industry produce cloths alone. Its printing industry was by far the most important in early 16th-century Europe. By the middle of the century, the number of printed publications in the city was twice that of all the other great Italian centers put together.⁴⁵ Yet, at the end of the 16th century, the Venetian press was struggling to maintain its supremacy and left plenty of room for its northern European competitors.

⁴² Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2000), p. 17.

⁴³ Domenico Sella, *Commerci e industrie a Venezia nel secolo XVII* (Venice, 1961), pp. 110–11; Molà, *The Silk industry*, pp. 58–60.

⁴⁴ Molà, *The Silk industry*, pp. 75–88.

⁴⁵ Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton, 1977), p. 229.

The 15th and 16th centuries witnessed the growth of the Venetian manufacturing sector, likely at a rather modest rate early on and at a higher speed over the course of the 16th century. Several factors favored this growth, and they depended both on the dynamics of international markets as well as on the emergence of local energies. Growing European demand for luxury products (spices, silk, porcelain, etc.) and more common ones (medium- and lower-quality cloths, food supplies, etc.), above all in urban areas and generated by demographic growth, became ever more constant toward the end of the 15th century and stimulated the Venetian commercial system. In addition, the availability of precious metals from Central Europe improved the capability of Europeans to purchase products from the East. Even at the beginning of the 17th century, Venice seemed to enjoy a luminous prosperity, which nonetheless was destined to wane soon.

The Restructuring of an Economic System

In the 1950s and 1960s, the issue of the Venetian decline came to join, and even bypassed in importance, the analysis of its economic success. The pioneering study of Carlo M. Cipolla regarding the economic decline of Italy in the 17th century⁴⁶ offered a point of reference for other scholars interested more in 17th-century shadows than in the bright lights of the Renaissance. In Cipolla's view, the causes of the depression that struck the industrial and commercial apparatus of the Italian peninsula during the 17th century—and in particular the wool industry—had to be sought in an inability to keep up with foreign competitors, who were able to take over the place of Italian products in the markets of Europe and the Levant. The English “new draperies,” lighter and with more fashionable colors, better satisfied a changing demand; and, moreover, they could be sold at lower prices. Cipolla identified three fundamental causes in this decline: 1) the guild structure of Italian manufacturing centers hindered flexible production and the introduction of innovations, targeting instead on the safeguarding of traditional principles (high product quality, elimination of competition between members of the same trade); this resulted in 2) the cost of labor in Italy being excessive in proportion to productivity, unlike what was happening in competing countries, which reflected the rigidity of the labor market; and 3) the heavy hand of the fisc in the

⁴⁶ Carlo M. Cipolla, “The Decline of Italy: The Case of a Fully Matured Economy,” *Economic History Review* 5 (1952), 178–87.

Italian states. To these reasons were added the aggressive mercantilist policy of the northern European powers that facilitated national exports by impeding imports; the dumping practiced in certain cases by competing merchants; the growing difficulties which Italian manufactures faced in accessing supplies of raw materials (particularly Spanish wool); the greater efficiency of seagoing vessels with respect to the traditional practices of Italian navigation; and, finally, the cost of money, which seems to have been lower beyond the Alps.

Much of Cipolla's diagnosis was confirmed in a fundamental study by Domenico Sella looking at the 17th-century Venetian economy. Sella argued for the contraction of Levantine demand owing to monetary fluctuations and the fall in purchasing power of more middling clientele; the growing inefficiency of Venetian maritime services (as shown by Tenenti)⁴⁷ shaken by piracy and by Anglo-Dutch technological superiority; not to mention the competition not only from foreign merchants but also from the cloths of the *terraferma*. Moreover, the routines of traditional exchange had been thrown into crisis by "northern" merchants who arrived rich in silver currency, which was in great demand in the eastern markets. Again in the Venetian case, the negative role of the guilds, high taxation, and the cost of labor are all called into account.⁴⁸ The same Venetian authorities in the Levant proved incapable of perceiving the shifts underway in the political relations between the periphery and the capital of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ Sella's book came out only a few years after an important conference held in Venice, whose objective was to place Venetian decline in a wider European context.⁵⁰ Eminent scholars had discussed and analyzed the 17th century through the Venetian prism and had made Venice a symbol for a century of crisis.

Foreign competition, diminishing labor productivity due to the aging workforce, and the economic policies of the government were the causes indicated by Rapp as well, as he once more confronted the theme of Venetian decline, though with several clarifications. The American scholar recognized that the Venetian economy had experienced a decline in relation to the international market in the 17th century, but he rejected the con-

⁴⁷ Alberto Tenenti, *Naufraiges, corsaires et assurances maritimes à Venise (1592-1609)* (Paris, 1959); Alberto Tenenti, *Piracy and the Decline of Venice, 1580-1615*, trans. Janet and Brian Pullan (Berkeley, 1967).

⁴⁸ Sella, *Commerci e industrie*.

⁴⁹ Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (Seattle, 1990), pp. 105-18.

⁵⁰ *Aspetti e cause della decadenza economica veneziana nel secolo XVII* (Venice, 1961).

cept of absolute decline since the city had not suffered a fall in revenues, which remained stable. Indeed, Venice had filled the fiscal voids provoked by the plague of 1630 rather quickly, thus demonstrating a notable capacity of recovery. Though Rapp lent excessive faith to certain sources, his view presented a more textured reality than the bleak depictions proposed in the past.⁵¹

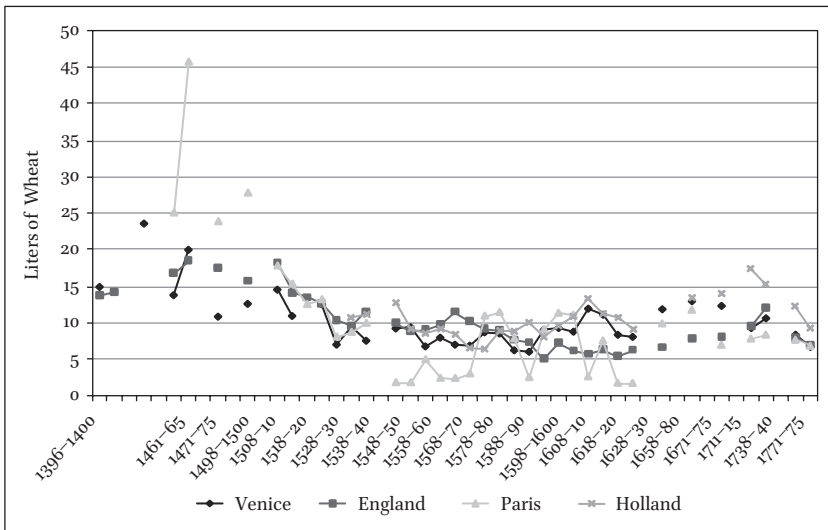
At present, it is difficult to blame the guilds for production difficulties. First, one must explain why the guilds were able to sustain the strong growth of the Renaissance period on the one hand and, on the other, constituted a serious impediment to its future growth. Second, the guild system showed itself quite flexible, and capable, as in the case of the silk and glass industries, of adjusting qualitative standards and production processes to adapt to changes in international demand through the use of technological innovation. It should be noted, moreover, that the decisions made by the guilds depended on the productive capabilities of the city, as well as on the political and social relations among the guild leaders, guild members, and the government in the wider context of the market.⁵²

As for the cost of labor, although we do not have comparable data for the manufacturing sector in the rest of Europe, the data series of construction workers' salaries demonstrate that in England and Holland, real salaries were higher than in Italy (see Figure 5.2). That would reflect a greater labor productivity in northern Europe. In Venice, in particular, the trend does not differ from the more general one (a tendency for workers' purchasing power to fall over the early modern period).

The comparison with other European cities indicates that, in fact, unspecialized workers in Venice enjoyed a relatively good socio-economic position, which improved during the course of the 17th century compared to English salaried workers and which was more or less equivalent to their Dutch colleagues. It is possible that a comparison in terms of the purchasing power of grain alone could create a false picture, and yet another interesting problem emerges. How does one evaluate the discrepancies between the various levels of salaries? The 17th-century differential between Venice and England would justify those who see high salaries as the cause of the crisis, but Holland also presents salaries which were just as high.

⁵¹ Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline*; and the critical comments of John A. Marino, "La crisi di Venezia e la New Economic History," *Studi storici* 19 (1978), 79–108.

⁵² Francesca Trivellato, "Guild, Technology, and Economic Change in Early Modern Venice," in Stephan R. Epstein and Maarten Prak, eds., *Guilds, Innovation, and the European Economy, 1400–1800* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 199–231.



Source: Author's dataset; and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Wages and the Standard of Living in Europe, 1500–1800," *European Review of Economic History* 3 (1999), 181, 185.

Figure 5.2. Real wages of building laborers in comparison, 1396–1775.

Yet, Venice itself could already boast higher real salaries than those in Florence in the later Middle Ages.⁵³ It must be noted, however, that with grain being a rather costly cereal in England, popular consumption there tended to focus mainly on rye. English salaries expressed in grain, then, underestimate workers' real purchasing power. Recent work has found, in fact, that a relatively high quality of life in the most developed areas was an element that distinguished them from areas with a lower rate of economic growth.⁵⁴ Thus, the Venetian data might be explained not as much in the prerogatives of the guilds as in the high concentration of wealth which the city continued to enjoy, even in the 17th and 18th centuries, and in its ability to modify its own productive structure. Indeed, the salaries

⁵³ Mueller, *The Venetian Money Market*, p. 656.

⁵⁴ Robert C. Allen, "Real wages in Europe and Asia: A First Look at the Long-Term Patterns," in Robert C. Allen, Tommy Bengtsson, and Martin Dribe, eds., *Living Standards in the Past. New Perspectives on Well-Being in Asia and Europe* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 111–30; Stephen Broadberry and Bishnupriya Gupta, "The Early Modern Great Divergence: Wages, Prices and Economic Development in Europe and Asia, 1500–1800," *Economic History Review* 59 (2006), 2–31. But see also Jan Luiten van Zanden, *The Rise and Decline of Holland's Economy. Merchant Capitalism and the Labour Market* (Manchester, 1993), pp. 136–37.

of common Venetian weavers were not at all superior to those of their colleagues in the *terraferma*.⁵⁵

How, then, must we explain the grave difficulties Venice faced on the international market? First, it must be clarified that decline in the Levant was not immediate: in 1623 the Venetian presence was still significant, and the volume of its exports was estimated at 2 million ducats, a sum that was not far off late 16th-century levels.⁵⁶ Even toward the end of the 18th century, Venetian ships continued to play an important role in trade between the Ottoman ports.⁵⁷ Yet there is no doubt that Venetian long-distance commerce was hard hit by its “northern” competitors. It is likely that they were able to beat the Venetians on the very terrain in which the latter had founded their success in the later Middle Ages, particularly in the ability to lower transaction costs and force competitors to pay higher ones. While Venetian merchant ships were considered easy prey for pirates and corsairs, the Dutch and, above all, the English were able to ensure more effective protection for their ships. Consequently, insurance rates to be paid for Venetian goods were higher than those applied to the products transported on “northern” vessels. The favorable conditions that Venetian operators had enjoyed in the Levantine markets disappeared between the 16th and 17th centuries to the advantage of their more aggressive and crafty competitors.⁵⁸ Difficulties in trade affected the manufacturing sector, whose production was largely for export. In reality, the costs of commercialization contributed significantly to the crisis of Venetian trade. Since production costs were not easily reducible, it was in the costs of intermediation that the commercial game had to be won. An adequate comparison between countries’ economic policies ought to consider not only production costs but also (and I would say, most importantly) those of commercialization.

Thus, from the mid-17th century, Venice revealed itself to be quite different with respect to the medieval city. Undoubtedly, long-distance international commerce, which had made the city’s fortune, was much

⁵⁵ Marcello Della Valentina, *Operai, mezzadi, mercanti. Tessitori e industria della seta a Venezia tra '600 e '700* (Padua, 2003), pp. 107–09.

⁵⁶ Ugo Tucci, “Vita economica a Venezia nel primo Seicento,” in *Galileo e la cultura veneziana* (Venice, 1995), p. 131.

⁵⁷ Daniel Panzac, “International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire During the Eighteenth Century,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24 (1992), 197–98.

⁵⁸ Luciano Pezzolo, “Violenza, costi di protezione e declino commerciale nell’Italia del Seicento,” *Rivista di storia economica* 23 (2007), 111–24.

reduced in scope, limited mainly to the Adriatic with an occasional foray into the Levant. Consequently, the size of the commercial fleet and, particularly, its composition had changed. If in the second half of the 16th century there were numerous ships of great capacity, in the next century the trend is unclear because of the influence of the War of Candia. In the second half of the 18th century, however, a reduction clearly appears in the average tonnage of the vessels of St Mark. Its ships nonetheless continued to operate intensely in the Adriatic, and the level of this activity would remain significant for the entire last century of the Republic.⁵⁹

Some manufacturing sectors, however, had witnessed a consistent growth. The production of items in silk and silk-gold weaves developed throughout the 17th century, to the extent that they likely surpassed the production levels of the 15th century, considered the golden age of Venetian silk. The spread of the mulberry in the countryside of the *ter-raferma* during the last two centuries of the Republic witnesses the rise in demand of raw material for manufactures. Numerous merchants made their fortunes in the silk trade and were able to accumulate enormous patrimonies. It is significant that, of the 128 families that acquired a title of Venetian nobility between 1646 and 1718, 78 (57 per cent) of them came from the merchant class. Even the printing industry, which had experienced a significant decline between the 16th and 17th centuries, recovered in the following decades. Venice maintained its preeminent position in the Italian market, publishing one-third of all titles in the 17th century; and later, the sector displayed a notable ability to respond to changes in demand.⁶⁰ Despite losing ground to foreign competition, the glassmakers of Murano were able to maintain an important role in specific sectors.⁶¹

The characteristics of 18th-century Venice were markedly different from those of the Renaissance city. Though its international activities had been reduced, there were still many merchants operating there, but now they were mainly Jews, Greeks, and Armenians. The service sector (grocers, hospitality) was now at least as important as the traditional cloth sector.⁶²

⁵⁹ Sella, *Commerci e industrie*, pp. 103–10; Massimo Costantini, *Una Repubblica nata sul mare. Navigazione e commercio a Venezia* (Venice, 2005), pp. 145–47.

⁶⁰ Brendan Dooley, "Printing and Entrepreneurialism in Seventeenth-Century Italy," *Journal of European Economic History* 25 (1996), 585; Mario Infelise, *L'editoria veneziana nel '700* (Milan, 1989).

⁶¹ Francesca Trivellato, *Fondamenta dei vetrai. Lavoro, tecnologia e mercato a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Rome, 2000).

⁶² Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione*, pp. 206–12; Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline*, p. 97.

The city represented a center of coordination in terms of an interregional economic area. Here there were financial, shipping, commercial, and manufacturing services; and it was here that the know-how, labor force, and entrepreneurs of the *terraferma* came together. At the same time, an analogous flow was directed towards various areas of the dominion. Behind the spread of industrial activities in the *terraferma*, one can see the capital of Venetian patricians: in the wool factory on Schio, in the northern hinterland of Vicenza, for silk spinning wheels in hills of Treviso, and for several paper factories.⁶³ Similarly, nobles from the lagoon concerned themselves with improving land production by investing in new technologies.⁶⁴ By now, the *terraferma* was assuming real importance, even for the well-being of the Venetians. In the regional division of labor, the capital demonstrated a marked vocation for the production of luxury goods, while the centers of the hinterland dedicated themselves to less prestigious industries.⁶⁵ Can one thus speak of the formation of a regional economy? In the present state of research, it is premature to give a definitive answer. Undoubtedly a high degree of integration can be identified in some sectors (the grain and financial markets); and even in the fiscal sector, the high barriers that had characterized the relations between Venice and its subject provinces in the Renaissance were lowered slowly over time. Yet the diaphragm that separated the city on the lagoon from the rest of its state never gave way: a diaphragm that was perhaps more cultural and ideological than economic but which, until recent times, also has heavily conditioned the relative historiography. Only recently, in fact, have we turned to consider the entire state (or better, the Italian *terraferma*) in order to better understand the economy of Venice.

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Naturally, the *Archivio di Stato* in Venice offers an enormous number of primary sources for any research project, particularly for topics of economic history. Since a large part of the documentation is subdivided according to the institutional structure of the government,

⁶³ Ivo Mattozzi, "Intraprese produttive in Terraferma," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7 (1997): *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, pp. 435–79.

⁶⁴ Georgelin, *Venise*, pp. 349–92; Gullino, "Venezia e le campagne," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8 (1998): *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Piero Del Negro and Paolo Preto, pp. 651–702.

⁶⁵ Salvatore Ciriaco, "Venise et ses villes. Structuration et déstructuration d'un marché régional, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle," *Revue historique* 276 (1986), 287–307.

it is necessary to familiarize oneself with the responsibilities of the different magistracies. One must consider, however, that there were often tasks that overlapped between different organs of government. The key to enter into the labyrinth of the archive is provided by the Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali: *Guida generale agli Archivi di Stato italiani* (Rome, 1994) 4:858–1148 [the part concerning Venice]. The Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, and Biblioteca della Fondazione Querini Stampalia contain material that helps to complete that of the *Archivio di Stato*. One must not underestimate the riches of the archives and libraries of the *terraferma*, which can provide important data and information at the provincial level. In this case as well, the *Guida* can be of great assistance.

Although printed primary sources are less numerous than those available to the medieval scholar, they are nonetheless of great importance. Particularly important are the *Diarii of Marin Sanudo*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin, Federico Stefani, Nicolò Barozzi, Guglielmo Berchet, and Marco Allegri, 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1903), which regard the dates of 1496–1533 and offer an enormous amount of information. The *Diarii (1494–1512)* of Girolamo Priuli, ed. Arturo Segre and Roberto Cessi, 3 vols (Città di Castello and Bologna, 1912–41) are less detailed and deal with a more limited chronological period. Also useful are the *Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500* by Domenico Malipiero, ed. Agostino Sagredo, published in *Archivio storico italiano* 7 (1843–44), 5–720. Recently, Christiane Neerfeld, “*Historia per forma di diaria*,” *La cronachistica veneziana contemporanea a cavallo tra il Quattro e il Cinquecento* (Venice, 2006) has attributed this work to Pietro Dolfin. The website of the *Archivio di Stato* of Venice (<http://www.archiviodistatovenezia.it/divenire/collezioni.htm>) offers the chance to consult important documentary series up to 1500. Some documents have been published by Brian Pullan and David Chambers in *Venice. A documentary history, 1450–1630* (Oxford, 1992). See also *Il libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer* (Costantinopoli 1436–40), ed. Tommaso Bertelè (Rome, 1956); *Lettere di commercio di Andrea Barbarigo, mercante veneziano del '400*, ed. Salvatore Sassi (Naples, 1951); *Lettres d'un marchand vénitien Andrea Berengo (1553–56)*, ed. Ugo Tucci (Paris, 1957); and *Lettere di Vincenzo Priuli capitano delle galee di Fiandra al doge di Venezia, 1521–1523*, ed. Francesca Ortalli (Venice, 2005). For financial history, see *I prestiti della Repubblica di Venezia*, ed. Gino Luzzatto, *Documenti finanziari della Repubblica di Venezia editi dalla R. Accademia dei Lincei*, ser. 3, vol. 1, part 1 (Padua, 1929); the *Bilanci della Repubblica di Venezia*, ed. Fabio Besta, 3 vols (Venice, 1903–12); vol. 4 is edited by Angelo Ventura (Padua, 1972). Regarding the Flemish community from 1568–1621, see the notarial acts summarized in *Marchands flamands à Venise*, eds. Winfried Brulez and Greta Devos, 2 vols (Bruxelles-Rome, 1965–86); for the German community, see Heinrich Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venedig und die deutsch-venetianischen Handelsbeziehungen*, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1887).

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INDUSTRY AND PRODUCTION IN THE VENETIAN *TERRAFERMA* (15TH–18TH CENTURIES)

Edoardo Demo

In the last 30 years of Venetian historiography, few areas have attracted greater interest than the history of manufactures and commerce in the *terraferma*, (also referred to as the Veneto) during the early modern period. Indeed, in the space of just a few years, the appearance of a large number of monographs, essays, and articles has visibly augmented our knowledge of the field; a flowering of new and original research that has permitted historians to re-evaluate well-established interpretations that had gone unchallenged for decades.

For many years, in fact, Venice's undisputed leadership of the region in both commercial activity and various industrial sectors had led scholars to concentrate their attention almost exclusively on the *Dominante* and to avoid bringing their analyses to bear (if not incidentally or with brief references) on the *terraferma*. Yet, as the most recent studies have demonstrated, this region appears as one of the most densely populated and prosperous areas in all of Europe in the early modern centuries, with a degree of urbanization among the highest of its time. Moreover, this zone was characterized by a considerably articulate and varied presence of industrial activity.

In the pages that follow, after a quick reconstruction of the lively historiographical debate regarding the development of manufactures in the “*stato da terra*,” attention will focus particularly, though not exclusively, on the most pivotal sector of the Venetian economy between the 15th and 18th century: textiles. Analysis will touch not only those aspects linked to production but also questions regarding commercial activity and the placement for sale in various markets of the manufactures produced in both the cities and the smaller centers of the *terraferma*.

The Historiographical Debate

The mainly erudite studies produced between the end of the 19th century and 1950s and 1960s all painted an abysmal picture of economic conditions in the Veneto at the beginning of the early modern period, suggesting

that wool-working, the primary sector of urban manufacturing, had gone into an irreversible crisis by the 15th century, if not previously with the onset of Venetian domination.¹ Not even those studies on the role of industry in support of Venetian 16th-century economic prosperity, conducted from the 1950s and thanks to which the Republic's capital was attributed the status of a great manufacturing center, had the effect of stimulating a deeper interest in the *terraferma*. In fact, the latter ended up being singled out even more clearly as an exclusively agricultural and rural periphery which provided the *Serenissima* with raw materials and food supplies and filled via emigration the demographic voids created by the plague in Venetian workshops and *fondaci*.²

It was only with Bruno Caizzi's wide-ranging investigation of manufacturing in the Venetian Republic during the 18th century that historians first identified a group (in truth, a quite limited group) of areas, urban centers, and individual dynamic enterprises that were innovative and growing and which stood out from a landscape otherwise dominated by decadence, conservatism, and the defense of consolidated interests and privileged groups. In this case, the growth of wool production in the foothills of Vicenza and Treviso and, more generally, the shift in the production of manufactures from urban centers to the countryside were greeted as the overcoming of a vestigial barrier from the late medieval past and a necessary condition for the affirmation of novel systems of production and labor relationships and the beginning of processes of technological innovation. According to this vision, the passage from the urban guild system to rural manufacturing implied the destruction of the system of economic institutions inherited from the Renaissance, and this, in turn, opened the way in the region's more advanced areas for the affirmation of the factory system. Indeed, Caizzi opens his study with a chapter entitled "The Weight of Tradition," in which the author reviews all the factors that impeded the development of the 18th-century Veneto, from "guild

¹ Giovan Battista Zanazzo, *L'arte della lana a Vicenza (secoli XIII–XV)* (Venice, 1914); Michele Lecce, *Vicende dell'arte della lana e della seta a Verona dalle origini al XVI secolo* (Verona, 1955); Maria Borgherini, *L'arte della lana in Padova durante il governo della Repubblica di Venezia, 1405–1797* (Venice, 1964).

² Gino Luzzatto et al., *Aspetti e cause della decadenza economica veneziana nel secolo XVII* (Venice/Rome, 1961); Gino Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia dal XI al XVI secolo* (Venice, 1961); Brian Pullan, ed., *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1968). A rather later example of this approach is Richard T. Rapp, *Industria e decadenza economica a Venezia nel XVII secolo* (Rome, 1986).

obstruction" to the "privileges of the *Dominante*" and concluding with the complex tax system that governed production and exchange.³

In the wake of Caizzi's discoveries, a series of studies looked to deepen our knowledge of the leading lights in the region's manufacturing sector: see Angela Maria Girelli's work on silk manufacturing in Verona, Ivo Mattozzi on the paper industry, and Mario Infelise on the Remondini printing house in Bassano.⁴

Under the influence of the new interpretation of 17th-century Lombardy proposed by Domenico Sella, in the early 1980s there began to develop an alternative vision of early modern Veneto manufacturing that differed from Caizzi's thesis.⁵ Instead of the contrast between a Renaissance past better left behind to free up space for growth opportunities, there were attempts to plot a course which, though tortuous and marked by phases of crisis and transformation, underlined elements of continuity, reconstructed an uninterrupted narrative and permitted the revision of judgments regarding the regional economic picture still dominated by a generalized, grim pessimism. The feeling common among scholars was that there was still much work to be done. Walter Panciera exemplified this belief in his work of the mid-1980s. Regarding industrial activities in operation in the zone around Vicenza in the early modern period, he noted that "without fear of contradiction it should immediately be observed the research in the field of the economic history of the Venetian *terraferma* in the early modern period, particularly in the manufacturing sector, is just beginning and is far from having established the bases for producing even a general sketch of any completeness."⁶

Even in 1998, in a note commenting upon Panciera's fundamental book on wool-working in the Venetian Republic between the 16th and 18th centuries⁷ (which it would be no exaggeration to define as pioneering

³ Bruno Caizzi, *Industria e commercio della Repubblica veneta nel XVIII secolo* (Milan, 1965).

⁴ Angela Maria Girelli, *Il setificio veronese nel Settecento* (Milan, 1969); Ivo Mattozzi, *Produzione e commercio della carta nello Stato Veneziano settecentesco. Lineamenti e problemi* (Bologna, 1975); Mario Infelise, *I Remondini di Bassano* (Bassano del Grappa, 1980).

⁵ Domenico Sella, "Le attività manifatturiere nelle valli bergamasche," in Aldo de Maddalena, Marzio Achille Romani, and Marco Cattini, eds., *Storia di Bergamo: il tempo della Serenissima*, vol. 3: *Un Seicento in controtendenza* (Bergamo, 2000), pp. 83–98.

⁶ Walter Panciera, "Le attività manifatturiere nel Vicentino tra XVI e XVIII secolo e la cartiera di Dueville," in Claudio Povolo, ed., *Dueville. Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato* (Vicenza, 1985), p. 1035.

⁷ Walter Panciera, *L'arte matrice. I lanifici della Repubblica di Venezia nei secoli XVII e XVIII* (Treviso, 1996).

for the later historiographical development on the subject), Michael Knapton underlined the importance of the said work, pointing out that, regarding the theme in general and the evolution of manufactures in the Venetian state in particular, "there existed neither in-depth analyses nor an adequate general vision of the whole." Knapton recognized that, starting in the mid-1980s, some contributions, such as the works of Salvatore Ciriaco, had offered some "interesting points of reflection [...] aiming to bring the discussion of the reality of the Venetian state into contact with general interpretive paradigms like proto-industry"; but at the same time, he continued to emphasize the evident gaps in knowledge with regard to manufactures in the Venetian *terraferma* both in urban zones and in various rural centers between the 15th and 18th centuries.⁸ The works of Giovanni Zalin and Giovanni Luigi Fontana have certainly highlighted the continuity of the manufacturing vocation in certain identifiable areas, which, despite their limited size, have been of great economic importance from the 16th century up to the present, and in particular the foothill and pre-alpine zones of Vicenza, Treviso, and Venetian Lombardy.⁹ Yet there remained an urgency to continue upon the path initiated by Panciera's work in order to obviate the extremely fragmentary nature of the pieces to the interpretive puzzle.

Such appeals also came from other scholars interested in the spread and development of Veneto manufacturing in the pre-industrial age, motivated by the important debate regarding two historiographical themes of particular interest and, in part, connected: the more or less presumed affirmation of an economic region and a so-called "Veneto regional market," with the connected problem of the development of forms of economic integration and territorial division of labor on a regional scale (a theme particularly dear to scholars of the late medieval and early modern periods; see, for example, the contributions in this regard—beyond the above-mentioned

⁸ Michael Knapton, "I lanifici veneti in età moderna," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 156.4 (1998), 745–55, 745. Among Ciriaco's various works, see, for example: Salvatore Ciriaco, "Protoindustria, lavoro a domicilio e sviluppo economico nelle campagne venete in epoca moderna," *Quaderni Storici* 18 (1983), 57–80; "Echecs et réussites de la proto-industrialisation dans la Vénétie. Le cas du Haut-Vicentin (XVII^e–XIX^e)," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 32 (1985), 311–23; and "Venise et ses villes. Structuration et destructuration d'un marché régional XVI–XVIII siècle," *Revue Historique* 286.2 (1986), 287–307.

⁹ Giovanni Zalin, *Dalla bottega alla fabbrica. La fenomenologia industriale nelle province venete tra '500 e '900* (Verona, 1987); Giovanni Luigi Fontana, "Il Lanificio scledense da Nicolò Tron ad Alessandro Rossi," in Giovanni Luigi Fontana, ed., *Schio e Alessandro Rossi. Imprenditorialità, politica, cultura e paesaggi sociali del secondo Ottocento* (Rome, 1985), pp. 71–155.

Salvatore Ciriaco and Michael Knapton—of Paola Lanaro, Gian Maria Varanini, and Andrea Zannini)¹⁰; and the search for possible elements of historical continuity to explain the genesis of industrial districts, with the aim of demonstrating, to use the words of Fontana, “how industrialization in numerous areas of the region has deep and durable roots.”¹¹

The landscape today is decidedly richer than it was even a short time ago. Numerous volumes published in the last few years on the argument of interest here have made it possible to grasp the peculiarities of manufacturing development in the “*stato da terra*.” These studies are mainly characterized by in-depth archival investigations and the use of sources conserved in the archives and libraries of Venice’s subject cities which had long been under-utilized by scholars, such as notarial acts and judicial sources. Some examine single areas or particular enterprises; others are best characterized as overviews motivated by the need to “overcome the traditional division between the *Dominante* and the *Dominio* so as to embrace in a single vision the entire territory subject to the Republic of Venice.”¹² Most of these are dedicated to the textile industry and particularly its two principal sectors, wool and silk production, which represented the cornerstones of the Veneto’s pre-industrial economy. They not only stimulated international commerce with the exportation of unfinished and finished goods but also “constituted a supply of technical and entrepreneurial know-how that would play a key role in the later phases

¹⁰ Beyond the works cited in note 8, see Salvatore Ciriaco, “L’economia regionale veneta in epoca moderna. Note a margine del caso bergamasco,” in Michael Knapton, et al., *Venezia e la Terraferma. Economia e società* (Bergamo, 1989), pp. 43–76; Michael Knapton, “City Wealth and State Wealth in Northeast Italy, 14th–17th centuries,” in Neithard Bulst and J.-Ph. Genet, *La ville, la bourgeoisie et la genèse de l’état moderne (XII–XVIII siècles)* (Paris, 1988), pp. 183–209; Paola Lanaro, *I mercati nella Repubblica Veneta. Economie cittadine e stato territoriale (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Venice, 1999); Gian Maria Varanini, “Introduzione,” in Varanini, *Comuni cittadini e Stato regionale. Ricerche sulla Terraferma veneta nel Quattrocento* (Verona, 1992), pp. xxxv–lxvi; Gian Maria Varanini, “Elites cittadine e governo dell’economia tra comune, signoria e ‘stato regionale’: l’esempio di Verona,” in Giovanna Petti Balbi, ed., *Strutture del potere ed élites economiche nelle città europee dei secoli XII–XVI* (Naples, 1996), pp. 135–68; and Andrea Zannini, “L’economia veneta nel Seicento. Oltre il paradigma della ‘crisi generale,’” in *La popolazione italiana nel Seicento* (Bologna, 1999), pp. 473–502.

¹¹ Giorgio Borelli, “Un problema di storia economica: i distretti industriali,” *Studi Storici* Luigi Simeoni 47 (1997), 119–27; Giovanni Luigi Fontana, “Industria e impresa nel Nord Est d’Italia,” in Antonio Di Vittorio, Carlos Barciela Lopez, and Giovanni Luigi Fontana, eds., *Storiografia d’industria e d’impresa in Italia e Spagna in età moderna e contemporanea* (Padua, 2004), p. 165.

¹² Fontana, *Storiografia d’industria e d’impresa*, p. 174.

of the region's industrial development."¹³ But neither has there been a lack of studies regarding other important secondary sectors, such as knitwear and printing, building and leatherwork, and even the mining industry, the working of paper and glass, and the production of salnitrate and materials for war. As we shall see better in the pages to come, this series of contributions has allowed historians to show that the Venetian, even in the 15th century, was permeated by a decidedly precocious manufacturing vocation that was particularly evident not only in the main urban centers (Bergamo, Brescia, Padua, Treviso, Verona, and Vicenza) but also in good part of the foothill and low-alpine zones between the region around Bergamo and that of Feltre and Belluno. Finally, rather than focus their attention on the decline of Venice and its subject cities (as had been done in the past), these studies have concentrated on the capacity of merchants and entrepreneurs in the Veneto to react—often through innovation—to the more general restructuring of the European economy underway in the early modern centuries.¹⁴

¹³ Fontana, *Storiografia d'industria e d'impresa*, p. 174.

¹⁴ With no claims to completeness, in addition to those already cited in the previous notes, see: Giovanni Luigi Fontana, ed., *Le vie dell'industrializzazione europea* (Bologna, 1997); Giovanni Luigi Fontana and Ennio Sandal, eds., *Cartai e stampatori in Veneto* (Brescia, 1997); Ivo Mattozzi, "Intraprese produttive in Terraferma," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 7 (1997): *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi; Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore/London, 2000); Luca Molà, Reinhold C. Mueller, and Zanier Claudio eds., *La seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento. Dal baco al drappo* (Venice, 2000); Edoardo Demo, *L'"anima della città." L'industria tessile a Verona e Vicenza (1400–1550)* (Milan, 2001); Edoardo Demo, "L'impresa nel Veneto tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna," *Annali di storia dell'impresa* 14 (2003), 251–62; Lanaro, *La pratica dello scambio*; Raffaello Vergani, *Miniere e società nella montagna del passato. Alpi venete, secoli XIII–XIX* (Verona, 2003); Andrea Caracausi, *Nastri, nastrini, cordelle: l'industria serica nel Padovano, secc. XVII–XIX* (Padua, 2004); Edoardo Demo, "L'industria tessile nel Veneto tra XV e XVI secolo: tecnologie e innovazione dei prodotti," in Paola Massa and Angelo Moioli, eds., *Dalla corporazione al mutuo soccorso. Organizzazione e tutela del lavoro tra XVI e XX secolo* (Milan, 2004), pp. 329–41; Giovanni Luigi Fontana and Gérard Gayot, eds., *Wool: Products and Markets (13th–20th Century)* (Padua, 2004); Francesco Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi. Manifatture e commerci nel Vicentino 1570–1700* (Milan, 2004); Walter Panciera, *Il governo delle artiglierie. Tecnologia bellica e istituzioni veneziane nel secondo Cinquecento* (Milan, 2005); Paola Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World: Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland (1400–1800)* (Toronto, 2006); Giovanni Favero, "New and Old Ceramics: Privileged Firms, Products and Markets in the Venetian Republic in the 17th and 18th Centuries," in Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World*, pp. 271–316; Katia Occhi, *Boschi e mercanti. Traffici di legname tra la contea di Tirolo e la Repubblica di Venezia (secoli XVI–XVII)* (Bologna, 2006); and Andrea Mozzato, "I drappieri di Venezia incontrano i lanaioi di Terraferma. Per una storia del lanificio veneto nel '400," *Studi Storici Luigi Simeoni*, 60 (2010), 47–60.

Manufactures

The Wool Industry

From the creation of the Venetian regional state, the *terraferma* assumed the appearance of an area marked by a lively wool production to be found in all the principal centers west of the capital, and often distant only a few dozen kilometers from one another. This production was generally of good quality and destined for export; after another phase of solid expansion in the second half of the 15th century, production entered a slow but steady withdrawal, which by the early 17th century led to a general reorganization of urban production capacities and which was mitigated only in part by a strong corresponding growth in the production of headwear and knitwear. The only real exception to the aforementioned picture is the case of Bergamo, whose ability to maintain levels of cloth production was the fruit of a particularly effective process of innovation and material reconversion which aimed to adapt to the new demands of international markets.

In addition to the wide variety of available energy sources (particularly water and wood), one of the principal factors behind the development of the Veneto wool industry in the early modern period was the plentiful availability of mid- to high-quality local wool. It was this factor which distinguished the manufacturing centers of the Venetian *terraferma* from other principal Italian centers of wool production for export. The latter were practically obligated to resort to the use of raw materials of foreign provenance in production; but between the 14th and 15th centuries, and particularly in Verona, Vicenza, and Padua, there was a conscious attempt to improve the quality of local wool, thanks to which merchant-entrepreneurs in the *terraferma* were slowly able to liberate, in large part, their production of high-quality cloth from a dependence on foreign raw materials. It was only in the late 16th century, with a crisis of local sheep-farming more qualitative than quantitative and more evident for Verona than Vicenza, Padua, and the other areas of the Veneto, that references to the use of "local" wool in urban production become increasingly sporadic and tended to regard mainly the production of manufactures in which the locally produced raw material was mixed with foreign wool, particularly Spanish (Castilian) or of Balkan origin (the so-called "*salonicche*").¹⁵

¹⁵ Edoardo Demo, "Wool and Silk: The Textile Urban Industry of the Venetian Mainland (XV–XVII centuries)," in Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World*, pp. 219–20.

Another factor of no little importance in explaining the success obtained by urban wool producers in the early modern period was that the organizational solutions they adopted were anything but monolithic and were indeed far more complex and multi-faceted than previously thought, characterized by considerable flexibility and a capacity to adapt to varying market and conjunctural demands. Thus, it was not only a question of the classic organization of production particular to de-centralized manufacturing (the “putting-out” system or *Verlagssystem*). Rather, the latter co-existed not only with tiny, family-based, autonomous enterprises—thus theoretically more in line with domestic industry (*Kaufsystem*) rather than a single operation carried out in the domicile—that executed the various phases of wool-working up to and including the weaving, and then left to the purchaser the task of finishing and dyeing the cloth, but also with enterprises enjoying a much greater availability of capital which, in order to optimize costs, brought together different phases of production. Through their possession of looms and workshops for dyeing, they ended up directly managing these phases as well, without having to entrust them to outside *ateliers*. Thus we can explain the existence of veritable “proto-factories” such as that of Antonio Pelo, a wool producer from Vicenza who in 1564 declared that he possessed a building that housed “113 of his workers who work wool and make cloth.”¹⁶

The accurate selection of raw materials, particularly those obtained locally, and an elevated flexibility in the organization of production thus favored the development of high-quality urban wool production destined prevalently for export. During the 15th century, this production witnessed a continuous product innovation made necessary by the demands of the market and generally tending toward the production of heavier, larger pieces of textiles; it was this capacity to adapt to the market which determined its undoubted success at an international level.¹⁷ Beyond Venice’s great commercial marketplace (undoubtedly one of the privileged destinations for wool manufactures of the *terraferma* cities), fabrics from the Veneto in the 15th century found ample markets in central and southern Italy (in Rome and Naples but also in Romagna, Marche, Abruzzo, Calabria, Puglia, and Sicily), the German lands, the Balkan peninsula, and

¹⁶ Panciera, *L'arte matrice*, pp. 37–38; Edoardo Demo, “L’impresa nel Veneto,” pp. 257–58; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 242–45; Demo, “Wool and Silk,” pp. 224–26.

¹⁷ Silvana Collodo, “La produzione tessile nel Veneto medioevale,” in Giuliana Eriani and Paola Frattaroli, eds., *Tessuti nel Veneto. Venezia e la Terraferma* (Verona, 1993), pp. 88–92; Demo, “L’industria tessile nel Veneto tra XV e XVI secolo,” pp. 332–34.

the Near East. Indeed, according to Eliyahu Ashtor, wool fabrics from Brescia, Bergamo, Vicenza, Verona, and Padua were among the most-requested products in several near-eastern markets, particularly in Egypt and Syria. A direct and important confirmation of Ashtor's claim comes from the *Tariffa de' pexi e misure* composed by Bartolomeo de Paxi in the second half of the 15th century and published in Venice in 1503.¹⁸ According to this treatise, *terraferma* fabrics were known to be exported and widely sold in Aleppo, Alexandria, Arta, Bursa in Anatolia, Beirut, Cyprus, Corfù, Istanbul, Damascus, Lepanto, Negroponte, Nicosia, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Salonika, Scutari in Albania, Split, Tripoli in Syria, and Valona. The sales of textiles from cities in the Venetian *terraferma* in various locations in the Balkans and Near East is further and abundantly confirmed by data available from Venetian notarial and judicial sources and in various accounting registers of operators active in the Levant. Constantinople, Corfù, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Cattaro, Beirut, la Tana, Trebizond, Acre, Amman, Damascus, Aleppo, Tripoli in Syria, Alexandria, Modone, and Corone are the localities that appear most often in the documentation consulted. This indicates a truly impressive reach, allowing one to argue that a good part of urban wool production in the Venetian state was actually fueled by the considerable demand from Levantine markets. Moreover, this interest for the woollen products of the *terraferma* is also demonstrated by another important fact: the presence of Ragusan, Greek, and Armenian merchants who came to the cities of the Veneto in order to purchase these fabrics directly from local producers. Documents bearing witness to their presence are particularly numerous for Verona. In the period between June 1475 and July 1477, for example, merchants from Ragusa purchased at least 2180 pieces of cloth on the banks of the Adige; while between January 1503 and September 1505 there were at least 2182 pieces acquired, once more in Verona, by 39 different operators from Corfù, Cyprus, and Crete.¹⁹

¹⁸ Bartolomeo de Paxi, *Tariffa de pexi e misure con gratia et privilegio* (Venice, 1503).

¹⁹ Eliyahu Ashtor, "L'exportation de textiles occidentaux dans le Proche Orient musulman au bas Moyen Age (1370–1517)," in *Studi in memoria di Federico Melis*, 7 vols (Naples, 1978), 2:321–24; Hidetoshi Hoshino *L'arte della lana in Firenze nel basso medioevo. Il commercio della lana e il mercato dei panni fiorentini nei secoli XIII–XV* (Florence, 1980), pp. 296–98; Paola Lanaro, "I rapporti commerciali tra Verona e la Marca anconetana tra basso medioevo ed età moderna," *Studi Storici Luigi Simeoni* 45 (1995), 9–25; Demo, *L'anima della città*, pp. 267–85 and 294–96; Benjamin Arbel, "The Last Decades of Venice's Trade with the Mamluks: Importations into Egypt and Syria," *Mamlûk Studies Review* 8.2 (2004), 37–86; Edoardo Demo, "Da Bressa se traze panni fini e altre sorte de panni de manco precio. L'esportazione dei prodotti tessili bresciani nel '400," *Annali Queriniani* 6 (2005), 105–18; Demo, *Wool and Silk*, pp. 226–29.

The international success of Veneto fabrics during the course of the 15th century was not exhausted in the century to follow, even if the capacity of urban wool producers in the *terraferma* to compete internationally would meet with ever greater difficulties. One of the most interesting results of studies on urban wool production in the early modern period, in fact, is to have demonstrated, contrary to what had long been thought, that production in cities did not go into crisis at the end of the 15th century. Or better, while for Treviso the available sources indicate radically worsened conditions by the last decades of the 15th century and in Brescia production was almost completely abandoned by the mid-16th century, such was not the case in Verona, Vicenza, Padua and, above all, Bergamo.²⁰

In the first three cities, after the disastrous production levels of the early 16th century, caused mainly by military conflict (the war of the League of Cambrai), wool producers demonstrated a discrete capacity to recover lost ground. In any case, the available documentation would seem to underline that in the said cities, wool production continued to be almost completely devoted to making the above-mentioned traditional "heavy" fabrics. In the 1550s and 1560s, these were still sold in respectable quantities, not only on the Venetian market but also at the fairs of Bolzano, in Genoa, Rome, Naples, Puglia, Calabria, and Sicily. This does not change the fact that, as underlined by several documents that would merit a more in-depth analysis, there were those in Verona and Vicenza who tried to "lighten" the cloth, adapting some products to new market demands connected to the increasingly important diffusion of lighter fabrics of Flemish origin. In any case, these look to have been only the sporadic attempts of individual producers, and for this reason they do not seem to have enjoyed much success. Importantly, they were unable to avoid the apparently sudden collapse in production that struck textile manufactures in Verona, Vicenza, and Padua in the last 30 to 40 years of the 16th century. It still proves difficult to identify the various causes of this nearly irreversible crisis. A convergence of multiple factors was likely at work, not the least of which must have been the competition not only from northern European textiles and nearby wool producers in Mantua but also from wool manufacturing in Venice itself (in addition to a progressive decline in local sheep-raising and the increasing temptation of moving to silk production,

²⁰ Panciera, *L'arte matrice*, pp. 13–38; Demo, *L'anima della città*, pp. 175–193; Walter Panciera, "Qualità e costi di produzione nei lanifici veneti (secoli XVI–XVIII)," in Fontana and Gayot, eds., *Wool: Products and Markets*, pp. 419–46; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 53–56.

growing steadily in these years). It was precisely between the 1550s and 1560s, in fact, that wool production in the capital saw a phase of prolonged expansion, passing from an average production of little more than 5000 pieces per year between 1516 and 1547 to more than 25,000 pieces in 1575. This boom in production was determined in large part by the considerable adaptive capacity demonstrated by the production of new, medium-quality fabrics (defined recently by Panciera as “the Italian road to lighter fabrics”), a typology which found ample placement in Levantine markets between the late 16th and early 17th centuries.²¹

When compared to the above-mentioned cases of Verona, Vicenza, and Padua, the evolution of the wool sector in Bergamo was clearly a case unto itself. Despite a reduction (though not a traumatic one) in the quantities produced between the mid- and late-16th century, the 16th century did not turn out to be a century of withdrawal in the wool industry, unlike what occurred in almost all the other cities of the Venetian *terraferma*. Rather, with the end of the 16th century there began a phase of consistent expansion that would not conclude until the beginning of the 18th century; this expansion was owed particularly to the innovative production choices made by the merchants of Bergamo. They made a strategic choice to furnish articles which imitated those produced in the Low Countries, characterized by their relatively simple workmanship, low cost, attractive appearance, use of mediocre-quality wool and employment of rural labor from the valleys; all of which aspects closely linked production in Bergamo to that of the Flemish and Dutch centers.²²

The serious losses caused by the collapse in fabric production in the majority of the *terraferma*'s urban centers in the last 30 years of the 16th century would be compensated in part by the consistent development of headwear and knitwear production during the course of the century. Stockings, knitted hats, and other clothing accessories contributed importantly to contrasting the consequences of the crisis of traditional wool production with regard to both employment and commerce. Such developments occurred in both Padua and Verona, where the production of knitted goods witnessed a rapid development especially in the second

²¹ Panciera, *L'arte matrice*, pp. 13–66; Edoardo Demo, “Le manifatture tra medioevo ed età moderna,” in Giovanni Luigi Fontana, ed., *L'industria vicentina dal Medioevo a oggi* (Padua, 2004), pp. 21–126; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 63–64.

²² Panciera, *L'arte matrice*, pp. 28–38; Walter Panciera, “Il lanificio bergamasco nel XVII secolo: lavoro, consumi e mercato,” in de Maddalena, Romani, and Cattini, eds., *Storia di Bergamo*, 3:99–132.

half of the 16th century. Greater labor mobility, a widespread use of multiple supply sources, and the assumption of roles of responsibility even by women were some of the most singular and characteristic aspects of this sector, one which included entrepreneurs using a strong centralization of production, such as the employment of 30–40 children under the control of supervisors and those merely involved in the acquisition and resale of goods.²³

In the Veneto, however, there was more than just an urban production of varying qualities. Already by the 15th century and even more so during the 16th and 17th centuries, wool-working had spread widely to numerous rural centers, especially, though not solely, in the foothill and low-alpine areas that could count on a significant availability of raw materials, hydraulic energy, and lumber *in loco*. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that, after the great pestilence of the 1630s, wool textile production would be located almost exclusively outside of the cities and the guild system. Such was the case in particular for multiple rural localities around Bergamo, Brescia, Vicenza, and Treviso in which, during our period, it is possible to find a lively, viable weaving operation; some of these, such as Gandino near Bergamo or Schio and Valdagno near Vicenza, would continue to play an important role even in the following centuries. Their production was nearly always geared (with some exceptions) to making cloth of mediocre quality, through the use of second-choice “local” wools, low-level imports, and even the remains of the shearing and teaseling processes, and they were characterized by their lower prices and durability. The cloth typical of rural industry was made not only for local buyers but also was widely sold in other territories of the Republic, as well as in neighboring states. Though a production whose value was decidedly inferior to the high-quality textiles characteristic of urban wool production in the 15th and 16th centuries, it would be a mistake to consider the rural manufactures of the Venetian *terraferma* a phenomenon of little economic importance, given that, from the 1720s on, the artisans and merchants of the foothill towns demonstrated an ability to exploit the opportunities offered by a phase of economic recovery and demographic

²³ Carlo Marco Belfanti “Le calze a maglia: moda e innovazione alle origini dell’industria della maglieria (secoli XVI–XVII),” *Società e Storia* 69 (1995), 481–501; Carlo Marco Belfanti, “Maglie e calze,” in Carlo Marco Belfanti and Fabio Giusberti, eds., *Storia d’Italia. Annali. XIX. La moda* (Turin, 2003), pp. 583–625; Carlo Marco Belfanti, “The Hosiery Manufacture in the Venetian Republic (16th to 18th centuries),” in Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World*, pp. 245–70; Andrea Caracausi, *Dentro la bottega. Culture del lavoro in una città d’età moderna* (Venice, 2008).

growth which impacted much of Europe. This phenomenon would later witness a further phase of significant expansion during the second half of the 18th century, to which the Venetian patriciate also contributed, as demonstrated by Nicolò Tron's interest in Schio.²⁴

If we were to try now to sum up in a few words the evolution of the wool industry in the Venetian *terraferma* in the early modern period, it would be necessary to underline the great contrast that characterized the wool sector in the Venetian Republic at the end of the 18th century to its counterpart three centuries earlier, particularly with respect to organization, location, product quality, and market outlets. We are undoubtedly faced with a profound process of reconversion marked by a nearly ubiquitous crisis in the urban production system (with the almost total disappearance of fabric production in the cities), which was met with a widespread shift in manufacturing activity to numerous centers in the foothill regions where low costs and an abundance of labor, the availability of large amounts of hydraulic energy and the proximity to large reserves of raw materials made such activity an attractive investment. What is certain is that, despite profound changes, wool production in the Venetian *terraferma* at the fall of the Republic does not appear to have been characterized by a particular backwardness compared to other European nations, and we can only agree with Panciera when he argues that "despite the undoubted archaism of much of the process of production, the future of the entire sector at the end of the 18th century did not appear particularly bleak."²⁵

The Silk Industry

In the late 16th century, the almost complete decline of urban wool production was offset by a positive trend in the silk industry, whose foundations in some areas of the Venetian Republic, such as the regions around Vicenza and Verona, had already been established in the previous century thanks to the notable spread of sericulture.

²⁴ Panciera, *L'arte matrice*, pp. 23–38; Demo, "L'industria tessile nel Veneto," pp. 336–39; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 227–55; Francesco Vianello, "Cloths for Peasants and the Poor: Wool Manufactures in Vicenza Countryside (1570–1700)," in Fontana and Gayot, eds., *Wool: Products and Markets*, pp. 411–17; Luca Mocarelli, "Manufacturing Activities in Venetian Lombardy: Production Specialization and the Making of a Regional Market (17th and 18th Centuries)," in Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World*, pp. 319–27; Francesco Vianello, "Rural Manufactures and Pattern of Economic Specialization: Cases from the Venetian Mainland," in Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World*, pp. 347–61.

²⁵ Panciera, *L'arte matrice*, pp. 325–333.

Mulberry and silk-worm cultivation especially in Vicenza and its territory appears to have been especially precocious and intense. By the mid-15th century, mulberry bushes were already widespread in the foothill zone (Schio, Thiene, Marano, Valdagno, Arzignano) and the area immediately surrounding the city. Moreover, in the 1480s, mulberry cultivation and the raising of silkworms were cited as the principal source of livelihood for the population and the "treasure of the community." This activity then appears to have undergone another period of strong growth in the first decades of the 16th century. Around mid-century, in fact, Vicenza's territory was able to produce at least between 35 and 40 tons of raw material per year, a figure which placed it among the highest producers on the Italian peninsula at the time. Silk certainly became one of the main investments of Vicenza's ruling class, who introduced mulberry cultivation *en masse* on their own landed possessions, such that the *morari* [mulberry trees] and *cavalieri* [cocoons] could now be found both in the city and in the countryside.²⁶

In Verona's territory as well, sericulture appears to have been widely practiced beginning in the 15th century, though the sector's development seems to have been slower and more limited with respect to its counterpart in nearby Vicenza. Even if the introduction of *morari* cultivation in the estates of the *veronesi* already in the late 15th century would seem to reflect the principal farming innovation of the time, raw silk production in Verona and its *contado* remained modest up through the first decades of the 16th century. In the 1530s, annual production of raw silk still failed to surpass 6.5 tons, compared to an average of more than 23 tons in and around Vicenza. It was in the century's fourth decade, however, that silk cultivation would witness a stunning period of growth, already producing more than 26 tons of raw silk by 1542 and registering an output that oscillated between 42 and 52 tons annually between 1581 and 1589. Nor does the sector's growth in Verona and the surrounding region seem to have slowed down, given that production is documented as surpassing 65 tons by the early 17th century.²⁷

During the 16th century, sericulture spread and expanded throughout much of the Venetian *terraferma*, though naturally to a more limited extent compared to Vicenza and Verona. According to a 1559 estimate,

²⁶ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 220–23; Demo, *L'anima della città*, pp. 47–52; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 53–64.

²⁷ Lecce, *Vicende dell'arte*, pp. 98–110; Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 220–23; Demo, *L'anima della città*, pp. 47–52.

total raw silk production in the *terraferma* came to more than 90 tons, a figure which would rise to little more than 150 tons by the first decade of the 17th century; such a figure would have been second only to the productive capacity of Calabria and at a similar level to that of Sicily, thus making the Venetian Republic the primary producer of raw silk in central and northern Italy in this period. In the first decade of the 17th century, the lion's share continued to be produced in Verona and Vicenza, but significant amounts of raw materials were also obtained from the regions of Treviso, Padua, Friuli, and, above all, from Venetian Lombardy. It was this last area, in fact, which would witness sustained growth in raw silk production in the centuries to come, such that by the end of the 18th century the territories of Brescia and Bergamo together look to have produced more than 10 per cent of all silk obtained from the Italian peninsula.²⁸

Silk spinning and throwing are documented as spreading at a similar rate to the cultivation itself. In this crucial phase of silk working as well, it was in Vicenza and Verona that these operations first underwent a precocious and in some ways extraordinary development. Their spread into other areas was certainly slower, though by the second half of the 16th century there were active throwing machines in Bassano, Padua, Udine, Brescia, Treviso, Feltre, and, most of all, Bergamo.²⁹

As for Vicenza, silk production between the 15th and 17th centuries underwent a veritable boom. In the city on the banks of the Bacchiglione, several silk mills were already active in 1418. There were at least eight of them between the 1450s and 1470s, a number destined to grow further in the following century as the city's importance as a hub of semifinished textile production continued to grow, such that in 1596 the city could boast no fewer than 100 silk mills. It must also be underlined that many of these were powered using a hydraulic wheel.³⁰

The spread of silk throwing was of no less importance in Verona. Here there are documents testifying to the activity of circular silk-throwing machines beginning in the first decade of the 15th century, while there is evidence of the presence of an hydraulic spinning wheel in the years immediately following. But it was in the 1540s that, alongside the dizzying growth of mulberry and silkworm cultivation in Verona's territory, spinning and throwing machines became ever more numerous: six in 1528,

²⁸ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 223–36; Mocarelli, "Manufacturing Activities in Venetian Lombardy," pp. 323–24.

²⁹ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 237–41.

³⁰ Demo, *L'anima della città*, pp. 207–08; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 83–89.

50 in 1543, 70 in 1549, 80 in 1558, and 88 only a year later. As the second half of the 16th century wore on, these figures continued to grow, evidence of the further growth in the production of semifinished goods such that, by 1627, the number of operational spinning machines would climb to 194.³¹

Particularly interesting is the case of Bergamo. Inasmuch as spinning and throwing seem to have developed more slowly with respect to Vicenza and Verona, this city too experienced a considerable increase in the production of semifinished articles during the second half of the 16th century. This growth would continue incessantly in the following century as well, when Bergamo would play host to a spinning operation that was particularly advanced technologically, thanks to the presence of dozens of machines powered by hydraulic energy.³²

If, as we have seen, between the 15th and 16th centuries the phase of spinning and throwing took place mainly in the cities, by the end of the 16th century and even more so during the century to come, the presence of hydraulic machinery for the production of spun and semifinished silk goods became ever more conspicuous in rural areas as well, particularly around Feltre and on the banks of the Brenta both north and south of Bassano. These regions saw a notable influx of capital which Venetian patricians invested towards the construction of hydraulic mills "*alla bolognese*," a quite complex and technologically advanced machinery whose usage required the constant surveillance of competent and expert technicians, in addition to the employment of numerous unskilled workers. To give an idea, the sole throwing machine in the town of Nove in 1694 provided jobs to no fewer than 250 workers, while in the early 18th century there were 1447 people (234 men, 726 women, and 478 children) employed by the 18 machines located in Bassano, Marostica, and other smaller centers in the area.³³

The production of silk articles in the early modern Veneto was quite varied and diversified, able to respond to the demands of different markets: raw silk in finer or "thicker" varieties; semifinished goods of modest value like the *fileselli* (obtained from the remains of reeling); or goods of the highest quality, as in the much sought-after *orsogli*. In the first three to four decades of the 16th century, the majority of production seems to have been dedicated to pieces of medium-quality spun silk to be used as

³¹ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 237–38; Demo, *L'anima della città*, pp. 208–09.

³² Mocarelli, "Manufacturing Activities in Venetian Lombardy," pp. 323–24.

³³ Vianello, "Rural Manufactures and Pattern of Economic Specialization," pp. 358–60.

wefts for velvets, and other items for export, generally crude (meaning not dyed) and destined for the markets of northern and central Italy where the manufacture of textiles was widespread (Ferrara, Florence, Mantua, Milan, and Genoa in particular). In later years a greater specialization in production would arise, of which we shall look at two examples. The raw silk obtained in Verona was particularly "thick," probably at least in part because of increasing demand from the German market, and thus the region seems to have oriented its production toward semifinished articles suitable for needlework, haberdashery, passementerie, tapestries, weavings, and tassels. In Vicenza, in contrast, where the raw silk seems to have been particularly "fine" and under the influence of transalpine markets (especially Lyons, but others as well), production appears to have gone more in the direction of *orsogli* to be used as the warp for weaving silk fabrics of greater value, though there is also no lack of evidence for a lower-quality production similar to Verona.³⁴

While the production of spun and semifinished goods was well developed, the severe prohibitions of the *Dominante* (aimed at defending the capital's silk manufactures) meant that for the entire first half of the 16th century, the activity of silk weaving was practically non-existent in the cities of the *terraferma*. Alongside the making of small clothing accessories such as handkerchiefs and silk veils, there is in fact no trace of cloth production except the small amounts produced as contraband.³⁵

With the sporadic destruction of illegal looms and repeated bans, it was only in the second half of the 16th century that the weaving of silk cloth was officially admitted in five cities of the *terraferma*, following Venice's concession for the production of black velvet. The first to obtain the said concession was Verona in 1554, followed by Vicenza in 1561, Brescia in 1562, Crema in 1565, and Bergamo in 1568. However, black velvets never seem to have achieved a position of significant importance within overall silk production, initially occupying a rather marginal place before disappearing altogether. In later years, silk weaving would certainly take off, not in velvets but in the production of *ormesini* (a light, fine fabric in great demand on the German market whose production is attested in Brescia, Bergamo, and particularly in Vicenza and Bassano); or mixed manufactures of silk and wool, or made using low-quality silk like the *buratti*,

³⁴ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 241–45; Demo, *L'“anima della città,”* pp. 210–12; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 99–101.

³⁵ Demo, *L'“anima della città,”* pp. 212–15.

doblioni, *capisoli*, and *bavellini* worked in Bergamo. In any case, weaving in the *terraferma* would remain, even up through the 18th century, a mainly secondary activity when compared with the production of raw silk and throwing/spinning.³⁶

Vicenza was the only significant exception to the rule, a city in which, during the 18th century, the development of an important weaving operation provided work for at least 800–900 looms, a scale nearly comparable to that of the capital. In any case, this production was not geared to furnish materials of particular quality. Rather, the various enterprises operating in the city offered cloth of medium to low quality at affordable prices, proving very successful in the Austrian and east-central German markets, though there is also evidence of the presence of silk fabrics from Vicenza in the Atlantic ports of Cadiz and Lisbon, from which they were presumably loaded onto ships destined for South America.³⁷

Finally, the making of braids, ribbons, and tassels which took root particularly in Padua and its territory during the course of the 17th century (and would continue until the fall of the Republic and beyond) was of no little importance. Though it employed, all things considered, only modest quantities of semifinished goods (in the central decades of the 17th century, 30,000–50,000 pounds of spun silk together with flax and other fibers), the production of braids employed thousands of female workers operating out of their homes and provided investment opportunities for dozens of merchants who exported their product to Munich, Vienna, Graz, and Regensburg via the fairs in Bolzano. Despite a lack of revolutionary technical innovations, this sector demonstrated the ability to survive several periods of crisis and represents a particularly interesting case of early modern rural manufactures in the Veneto since it developed outside of the area best known for its proto-industrial vocation, the foothill belt.³⁸

Given what has been said in the previous paragraphs, it is evident that the primary characteristic of urban silk production in the early modern Venetian *terraferma* was the production of raw silk and semifinished silk goods, while the working of finished silk fabrics occupied a role that, while not necessarily marginal, was certainly of secondary importance. In light

³⁶ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 261–98; Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, pp. 101–04.

³⁷ Walter Panciera, “La formazione delle specializzazioni economiche territoriali nel Sei e Settecento,” in Giovanni Luigi Fontana, ed., *L’industria vicentina dal Medioevo a oggi* (Padua, 2004), pp. 281–90.

³⁸ Caracausi, *Nastri, nastrini, cordelle*.

of this, it is clear that almost the entire production of raw silk and items of spun silk in the Venetian Republic in this period was exported, and almost exclusively beyond state borders. Producers in Vicenza and Verona distinguished themselves particularly in this line of work, operating along commercial trajectories that were largely independent and extraneous to Venetian intermediation; in the course of the 16th and in the 17th and 18th centuries, these trajectories would undergo profound modifications which led the Venetian *terraferma* silk industry to change numerous times both its specialized production and its market outlets, and thus propose new products for new markets.

While in the late 15th century and the first decades of the 16th, for example, raw silk, semifinished goods, and other manufactured products were destined mainly for Italian markets (above all Genoa, Milan, Bologna, and Mantua, but also Florence, Lucca, Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio Emilia), the importance of direct exports to the silk-weaving centers of the peninsula tended to diminish (without disappearing completely) in tandem with the spread of mulberry cultivation in many parts of northern Italy. From that point on, *terraferma* silk producers worked largely to satisfy demand coming from northern European countries, and the relationships among Vicenza, Verona, and other cities of the Republic involved in silk manufacturing increasingly intensified with the manufacturing cities of central and northern Europe. France, Flanders, and then England, Germany, Holland, and even Poland increasingly saw the presence and operation of enterprising merchants from the Veneto region, able to manage a multiplicity of exchange routes thanks to the creation of sophisticated mercantile networks.³⁹

That the examples of such men are truly innumerable demonstrates the international importance achieved by silk production in the Veneto. We might recall the Murari from Verona, who in 1571 could boast credits for over 100,000 ducats of sold silk in Bolzano, Rome, Antwerp, Lyons, London, and Nuremberg; or that of the Cogollo brothers of Vicenza, who between the 1550s and 1590s formed various companies with an initial capital of several thousand ducats (up to 30,000 ducats in some cases) and operated with their own agents and correspondents in the buying and

³⁹ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, pp. 241–46; Edoardo Demo, “Sete e mercanti vicentini alle fiere di Lione nel XVI secolo,” in Paola Lanaro, ed., *La pratica dello scambio: sistemi di fiere, mercanti e città in Europa (1400–1700)* (Venice, 2003), pp. 177–99; Vianello, “Mercanti, imprese e commerci nel Cinque e Seicento,” pp. 187–229; Demo, “Wool and Silk,” pp. 235–37.

selling of silk goods in Milan, Genoa, Lyons, Antwerp, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, and Leipzig.

Other Manufacturing Sectors

Between the 15th and 18th centuries, wool and silk production were not the only types of manufacturing practiced in the Venetian *terraferma*. Indeed, as has been recently underlined for the territory of Vicenza in particular, "the coexistence of a variety of types of production and specializations which survived in the same territory and sometimes coexisted in the same domestic unit was a peculiar feature of the foothill stretch, and distinguished it from the plains where the entire population was devoted to working the fields."⁴⁰ So it was that, as previously mentioned, other manufacturing sectors experienced significant development in the period under examination, distinguished by a significant investment of capital and a production frequently geared for exportation. Such was the case for leatherwork, the mining industry, paper, wood and glass, the production of salnitrate and materials for use in war, printing, ceramics, and the working of straw hats. Some of these, such as paper production, already had a centuries-long tradition of some importance; others, like the mining industry, experienced phases of intense activity in the early modern period and were marked by the employment of significant capital; still others, as in ceramic and straw-hat production, would take off only in the late 17th century, playing a fundamental role in the overall domestic income for a long time to come.⁴¹ Let us take a look at some of them.

Already widespread in much of the Venetian *terraferma* by the later Middle Ages, the working of paper witnessed a period of strong growth in the late 16th century and continued to increase through the 17th and 18th centuries. This was a sector which spread throughout the Veneto (particularly around Salò near Lake Garda, areas to the north of Vicenza and Treviso, but also around Verona and Padua) without concentrating itself in a particular zone, able to enjoy the investment capital of Venetian patricians tempted by the potential profits of a product in great demand internationally. The growth of the paper sector also led to undoubted benefits for the recovery of another activity present in the *terraferma* from the

⁴⁰ Vianello, *Seta fine e panni grossi*, p. 257.

⁴¹ See the bibliographic information in note 14.

late 15th century, printing and publishing, which in the years between the 17th and 18th centuries experienced a new phase of expansion.⁴²

With regard to the activity of mineral extraction, it is worthwhile to note, along with Raffaello Vergani, that "the knowledge and exploitation of small mineral deposits in the Venetian Alps dates back to the 12th century, but it was likely during the 1400s that it assumed a certain importance."⁴³

Indeed, between 1460 and 1530, Europe saw an unprecedented boom in mining activities and metallurgy, particularly with regard to non-ferrous metals: silver, gold, copper, and lead. Studies have shown that this phenomenon was most evident in central and eastern Germany, Tyrol, and Slovakia, in addition to other zones of less importance quantitatively, but just as important in terms of quality. Among these was certainly the area to the north of Vicenza, whose growth in the mining sector between the late 15th century and early 16th was certainly favored by the growing interest shown by the Venetian government in products under its "national" soil, particularly silver. It was not by chance that, in the last decades of the 15th century, the responsibilities for mineral extraction and metal-working passed gradually from the Senate to the Council of Ten (which in those very years was moving to concentrate the control of natural resources and the territory in general in its own hands), until the 1488 declaration of a veritable code of law for mining which not only rigorously set down the rights and responsibilities of concessionaires but also provided that disputes between or within mining companies fell under the exclusive jurisdiction of a mining judge, the Vicar General of Mines. Mineral extraction in Vicenza's territory witnessed its period of greatest splendor in the first decade of the 16th century, reaching an annual production of roughly 500–600 kg of silver; certainly a modest figure when compared to the 10,000 kg obtained on average in Schwaz (Tyrol) between 1526 and 1535, yet still an important number which helps "the district of Vicenza to emerge from the category of smaller silver centers."⁴⁴ But already by the first years of the century's second decade, silver production around Vicenza seems to have

⁴² Mattozzi, "Intraprese produttive in Terraferma," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7: *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Benzoni and Cozzi; Walter Panciera, "Le cartiere del Veneto occidentale (1550–1850 ca.)," in Fontana and Sandal, eds., *Carai e stampatori in Veneto*, pp. 37–54; Panciera, "La formazione delle specializzazioni economiche territoriali," pp. 246–53; Mocarelli, "Manufacturing Activities in Venetian Lombardy," pp. 326–27.

⁴³ Vergani, *Miniére e società nella montagna del passato*, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Vergani, *Miniére e società nella montagna del passato*, p. 23.

slowed down considerably. What for a time may have appeared a passing crisis revealed itself, by the end of the 1520s, to be a total and utter collapse; to use the words of Vincenzo Grimani, a Venetian patrician directly involved in exploiting the mines at Tretto and Recoaro, in the "largest and most copious mountains of silver [...] that provoked wonder in all of Germany" suddenly "it seems that the veins of silver have been lost."⁴⁵ That said, the will and investment capital to go forward were not lacking. In order to resolve the crisis, in fact, efforts were intensified both technically and economically; but nothing seemed capable of stopping the inexorable decline to which Vicenza's silver mines seem destined, not even recourse to important and even historic innovations such as the use of gunpowder c.1574 near Schio, a technique which during the 17th century would become widespread in Europe. In the 17th and 18th centuries, caolin was extracted from Vicenza's nearby mountains, and various attempts were made to revive the silver mines, though without success.⁴⁶

Among the other mining centers in the Republic's territories, we must also mention at least the *agordino*, particularly the mines of the Valle Imperina, which would remain important up to the 20th century, and above all the territories of Brescia and Bergamo (especially the Camonica, Trompia, and Sabbia valleys), which from the later Middle Ages until the 18th century were among the most important mining regions in Italy. Two pieces of data will suffice in that regard. It has been estimated that in Brescia's territory in the 16th century there were 15 functioning melting ovens for iron, the absolute majority of those present on the Italian peninsula at the time; while in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the amount of iron extracted from Brescia's nearby valleys totalled 250 tons per year, equal to one-third of the entire Italian production.⁴⁷

The activity of mineral extraction also gave work to dozens of forges that provided the iron necessary to sustain an important production of manufactures destined for agricultural work and, above all, the arms industry, for which Brescia was one of the European capitals of the age.

During the early modern period, Brescia's arms and armor production was a sector of absolute international importance. Despite the jealous control of Venetian institutions for its great strategic value, Brescia's

⁴⁵ Demo, "Le manifatture tra medioevo ed età moderna," pp. 80–81.

⁴⁶ Vergani, *Miniere e società nella montagna del passato*; Demo, "L'industria tessile nel Veneto tra XV e XVI secolo," pp. 73–81.

⁴⁷ Vergani, *Miniere e società nella montagna del passato*; Mocarelli, "Manufacturing Activities in Venetian Lombardy," pp. 325–26.

armaments industry was able to sell its products throughout Italy and Europe. The markets for such products, in fact, covered all of Italy and Europe, particularly in the princely states of the peninsula; as far as firearms were concerned, Brescia was the only provider until the mid-18th century. Brescian arms were available in the fairs of central Italy, where Greek and near-eastern merchants purchased them for export to the East. From the Lombard city, military manufactures went towards Venice, Ferrara, Mantua, Parma, Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Piedmont, and Savoy; but also to Spain, France, Germany, Poland, and Switzerland. Brescian arms for private use turned up, sometimes via re-exportation, in the Low Countries, Germany, France, Spain, Sardinia, Eastern Europe, the Near East, and north Africa. Naturally, Venice played a fundamental role in providing a market for Brescia's products, for the needs of its armies both in the *terraferma* as well as in the *stato da mar*. The success of the Lombard city's arms and armor was owed, among other things, to a vital ability with which Brescian armsmakers were blessed: an adaptability to the demands of the buyer. This characteristic made them highly sought-after by emissaries of the most disparate geographic provenance. While still maintaining the secrets of their art, the Brescians were able to manufacture Spanish corslets when they worked for the Spanish, and German-style armor when they worked for the Germans and Swiss.⁴⁸

Conclusions

It is beyond doubt that the progress achieved in the last 20 years of studies on manufacturing in the Venetian *terraferma* has allowed for a better knowledge of the evolution of this secondary sector in an ample portion of the Republic's territory. We can now modify and nuance the traditional vision of a Veneto economy whose development was blocked by its exclusively rural vocation, and re-evaluate the claims of those who have long argued that industrialization in the Veneto is a recent phenomenon devoid of historical precedents.

In light of the previous pages, it would not seem rash to consider the 15th- and 16th-century *terraferma* as a zone characterized by one of the highest concentrations of manufacturing activity in all of Europe, with

⁴⁸ Frederico Bauce, *Crescita e declino economico in una città di Antico regime. Il caso di Brescia tra la fine del Quattrocento e la seconda metà del Cinquecento* (Ph.d. thesis, Verona, 2009), pp. 116–34 and 154–87 with his ample cited bibliography.

the presence of some sectors (above all, wool and silk production) of international caliber, at the forefront both technologically and organizationally and able to produce manufactured goods of varying qualities that enjoyed notable success in Italy as well as in Europe and the Near East.

Research over the last two decades, moreover, has palpably enriched our knowledge of 17th-century manufactures and increased our familiarity with aspects of the 18th-century economic recovery which had been ignored or little studied by the first analyses of the period. It seems clear by now that the *terraferma* was not, even in the middle century of the early modern period, the stagnant agricultural backwater of a commercial and manufacturing metropolis that had gone into an irreversible decline. At least some of the cities, towns, and rural areas of the *terraferma* continued to produce and export semifinished and finished articles both in the Italian peninsula and abroad. Certainly, the levels of undoubted importance achieved in the previous centuries were no longer within reach, such that many positions of leadership or excellence enjoyed in the past were now ceded to the competition. But it is equally true that much of the Veneto remained a rich and populated area in the 17th and 18th centuries, pervaded by an impressive ability to resist the repeated crises that marked the years between the late 16th and early 18th centuries. The collapse of some urban manufactures was at least in part compensated by the consistent development of the transformative sector in rural zones. If the rate of urbanization certainly dropped, it still remained higher with respect to that of most other European countries. In the meantime, the rural Veneto was able to recover in 50 years the demographic losses suffered in the 1630 pandemic, a sure sign of what in some ways constitutes a surprising vitality that was certainly not the fruit of a "general crisis" of the economy.⁴⁹

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⁴⁹ Fontana, "Industria e impresa nel Nord Est d'Italia"; Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World*; Edoardo Demo, "Venezia e il Veneto nel secolo del presunto declino," in Augusto Roca de Amicis ed., *Storia dell'Architettura nel Veneto. Il Seicento*, Venice 2008, pp. 4–7.

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FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Anna Bellavitis

The purpose of this contribution is to present family practices—particularly matrimonial and inheritance—within the context of the complex juridical structure of Venetian society, and in relation to the economic activities carried out by the various social groups. The first part will examine the principal sources for the history of the Venetian family available to scholars and several problems that have grown out of the most recent research. Then the theme will be developed in three distinct sections that correspond to the three social groups into which Venetian society is traditionally divided—patriciate, bourgeoisie, and *popolo*.

Sources and Problems

The 1242 Tiepolo statutes constituted the foundations of Venetian family law. These statutes defined the duties and rights of family members, especially with regards to patrimony and succession, within a system which, while it maintained significant features of its own, was based on Roman law. Legislation regarding succession hinged on these norms, and an increasingly precise and in-depth policy of state intervention and control on the family was defined early on. This policy was enforced by means of the action of various judicial magistracies. The *Avogaria di Comun* was responsible, among other things, for registering patrician births and marriages, but also for examining the candidacies of non-noble women promised in marriage to members of the patriciate and for registering the marriages of patricians and *cittadini*. The *Giustizia Vecchia*, which maintained a record of apprenticeship and domestic service contracts, acted as guarantor for the circulation of minors among families and of their professional training, while many other magistracies, such as the *Giudici del Proprio*, the *Giudici del Procurator*, the *Giudici del Mobile*, and the *Giudici di Petizion* were responsible, in different forms, for the task of settling family conflicts.¹

¹ Roberto Cessi, ed., *Gli Statuti veneziani di Jacopo Tiepolo del 1242 e le loro glosse* (Venice, 1938); *Novissimum Statutorum ac Venetarum Legum volumen* (Venice, 1729); Marco

In some periods, state intervention could partially overlap with the competence of ecclesiastic courts. This is the case, for example, of the *Giudici del Procurator*, whose tasks included awarding dowries to women separated from their husbands and of the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia*, who were responsible for intervening when a promise of marriage was disregarded, in strict collaboration with the patriarchal court. The evolution of canon law on marriage, particularly in the time of the Council of Trent, is moreover at the origin of the multiplication of judicial sources, the object of important studies conducted in recent years.²

In contrast to the abundance of public sources, including notarial sources, there is a relative lack of private sources. There are account books and family “*cronache*” [chronicles]—celebrations of the family and its history, especially for the patriciate—but there are few *libri di famiglia* and *ricordanze*.³ The only ones which are known to date come from five families of *cittadini originari* and date back to the beginning of the early modern era (15th to 17th centuries). The obligation to register patrician

Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto comune e veneto* (Venice, 1779); Gaetano Cozzi, “La politica del diritto nella Repubblica di Venezia,” in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato, società e giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (sec. XV–XVIII)*, 2 vols (Rome, 1980), 1:15–145; Andrea Padovani, “La politica del diritto,” in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 2 (1995): *L’età del comune*, ed. Giorgio Cracco and Gherardo Ortalli, pp. 303–29; Victor Crescenzi, “Il diritto civile,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 3 (1997): *La formazione dello stato patrizio*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi, Giorgio Cracco, and Alberto Tenenti, pp. 409–74.

² Antonio Rigo, “Interventi dello Stato veneziano nei casi di separazione: I Giudici del Procurator. Alcuni dati degli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta del XVI secolo,” in Silvana Seidel Menchi and Diego Quaglioni, eds., *Coniugi nemici. La separazione in Italia dal XII al XVIII secolo* (Bologna, 2000), pp. 519–36; Gaetano Cozzi, “Padri, figli e matrimoni clandestini (metà secolo XVI–metà secolo XVIII),” in Gaetano Cozzi, *La società veneta e il suo diritto* (Venice, 2000), pp. 19–64; Renzo Derosas, “Moralità e giustizia a Venezia nel ’500–’600. Gli Esecutori contro la bestemmia,” in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato, società e giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (sec. XV–XVIII)* (Rome, 1980), pp. 431–528; Joan M. Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 2001); Daniela Hacke, *Women, Sex and Marriage in early Modern Venice* (Aldershot, UK/Burlington, Vt., 2004); Cecilia Cristellon, *La carità e l’eros. Il matrimonio, la Chiesa, i suoi giudici nella Venezia del Rinascimento (1420–1545)* (Bologna, 2011); and see the essays on Venice in four volumes edited by Silvana Seidel Menchi and Diego Quaglioni: *Coniugi nemici. La separazione in Italia dal XVI al XVIII secolo* (Bologna, 2000); *Matrimoni in dubbio. Unioni controverse e nozze clandestine in Italia dal XIV al XVIII secolo* (Bologna, 2001); *Trasgressioni coniugali. Concubinato, adulterio, bigamia (secc. XIV–XVIII)* (Bologna, 2003); and *I tribunali del matrimonio (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Bologna, 2006).

³ Dorit Raines, *L’invention du mythe aristocratique. L’image de soi du patriciat vénitien au temps de la Sérénissime* (Venice, 2006); Tiziana Plebani, “Vite di donne nei libri di famiglia veneziani,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 113/1 (2002), 91–106; Dennis Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft. Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice, 1400–1600* (Baltimore/London, 1996).

marriages and births with the *Avogaria di Comun* in a *Libro d'oro*, beginning at the start of the 16th century, is probably a cause of the scarce propensity on the part of patricians to preserve private memories of such events. On the contrary, in the case of *cittadini originari*, the choice to leave a record of oneself and one's family demonstrates the will to affirm one's social identity in the absence of a political role.⁴

After the quantitative research conducted in the 1950s, Venetian demography has been the object of specific investigations, either of single parishes or of social groups. In particular, research on the *Stati delle anime* have made it possible to take a look at family composition, which in the overwhelming majority of cases prove to be neolocal and nuclear, in accordance with a widespread urban model. The practice on the part of married couples of remaining in the parents' home was, however, the norm only in the patriciate, where the groom's family took in the new couple.⁵

The social structure of the Venetian population was determined especially by economic and political factors, which were tightly interwoven. The myth of the origins of the city is a collective myth, devoid of a founding hero—a myth which serves to establish the dominance of a harmonious and egalitarian political group composed of the “best.” Even in appearance, patricians tended to avoid distinctions among themselves; for a long time, sumptuary laws, while numerous and detailed, avoided prescribing the clothing suited to each social group.⁶ In the self-celebratory

⁴ James S. Grubb, “Memory and Identity: Why Venetians didn't keep *ricordanze*,” *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994), 375–87; James S. Grubb, *Family Memoirs from Venice (15th–17th centuries)* (Rome, 2009); Anna Bellavitis, *Identité, mariage, mobilité sociale. Citoyennes et citoyens à Venise au XVI^e siècle* (Rome, 2001).

⁵ Daniele Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia dalla fine del secolo XVI alla caduta della Repubblica* (Padua, 1954); Reinhold C. Mueller, “Peste e demografia. Medioevo e Rinascimento,” in *Venezia e la peste, 1348–1797* [Exhibition Catalogue] (Venice, 1979), pp. 93–96; Paolo Preto, “Peste e demografia. L'età moderna: le due pesti del 1575–77 e 1630–31,” in *Venezia e la peste, 1348–1797* [Exhibition Catalogue] (Venice, 1979), pp. 97–98; Giovanni Favero, Maria Moro, Pierpaolo Spinelli, Francesca Trivellato, and Francesco Vianello, “Le anime dei demografi: fonti per la rilevazione dello stato della popolazione di Venezia nei secoli XVI e XVII.” *Bollettino di demografia storica* 15 (1991), 23–110; Andrea Zannini, “Un censimento inedito del primo Seicento e la crisi demografica ed economica di Venezia,” *Studi veneziani* 26 (1993), 87–116; Volker Hunecke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica* (Rome, 1997); Romano, *Housecraft*; Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore/London, 2000). On the sources, see Francesca Cavazzana Romanelli and Ermanno Orlando, *Storia e struttura dei fondi parrocchiali veneziani. Prime indagini* (Venice, 2004).

⁶ Giuseppe Trebbi, “La società,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 6 (1994): *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi and Paolo Prodi, pp. 129–213; Raines, *L'invention*; Giulio Bistort,

image constructed between the 15th and 16th centuries and culminating in Gasparo Contarini's 1542 treatise, Venetian society was divided into two groups: patriciate and *popolo*, but within the latter category there was "the more honest part" for whom particular charges and privileges were reserved. The existence of a comfortable and "honorable" social class devoid of political rights is concealed by the tradition of treatises on the "myth of Venice" but appears in some 15th-century political projects and treatises, sometimes with polemical overtones.⁷

The early political definition of the governing class, beginning with the *Serrata* at the end of the 13th century, was in reality followed by a series of adjustments which were ongoing until early modern times and in which the constant redefinition of family roles and behavior also played a role.⁸ The forced opening at the end of the 17th century, when the title of patrician was put up for sale in order to meet the financial burden of the wars of Candia and Morea, represented a moment of grave crisis of identity from which it was difficult to emerge.⁹ Finally, in the last centuries of the Republic, Venetian political treatises organized the patriciate into various "classes," no longer solely on the basis of the family's relative antiquity but also on the basis of wealth. The 18th-century categorizations were organized beginning from the various branches, or patrician "*case*" [houses],

Il Magistrato alle Pompe nella Repubblica di Venezia (Venice, 1912); Luca Molà, "Leggi suntuarie in Veneto," in Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli and Antonella Campanini, eds., *Disciplinare il lusso. La legislazione suntuaria in Italia e in Europa tra Medioevo ed Età moderna* (Rome, 2003), pp. 47–57; Tiziana Plebani, "La sociabilità nobiliare veneziana nel secondo Settecento e i problemi dell'abbigliamento," in Roberto Bizzocchi and Arturo Pacini, eds., *Sociabilità aristocratica in età moderna. Il caso genovese: paradigmi, interpretazioni e confronti* (Pisa, 2008), pp. 87–104.

⁷ See the following, in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3: Franco Gaeta, "L'idea di Venezia," pp. 565–641; Franco Gaeta, "Venezia da Stato misto a aristocrazia esemplare," pp. 437–94; and Angelo Ventura, "Scrittori politici e scritture di governo," pp. 513–63; also Gaetano Cozzi, "Politica, società istituzioni," in Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia dalla Guerra di Chioggia alla riconquista della Terraferma* (Turin, 1986), pp. 3–271; and Gaetano Cozzi, "Domenico Morosini e il *De bene instituta re publica*," *Studi veneziani* 12 (1970) 405–58.

⁸ See Stanley Chojnacki: "In Search of the Venetian Patriciate. Families and Factions in 14th Century Venice," in John R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 47–90; Stanley Chojnacki, "Social Identity in Renaissance Venice: The Second Serrata," *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994), 341–58; and Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2000).

⁹ Roberto Sabbadini, *L'acquisto della tradizione. Tradizione aristocratica e nuova nobiltà a Venezia (sec. XVII–XVIII)* (Udine, 1995); Raines, *L'invention*.

identified not only by surname but also by parish rather than by the *casati*, that is, the group of patricians who shared the same surname.¹⁰

Venice's political role as capital of a composite territorial state and its economic role as a center of exchange imply a constant influx of immigrants, whose integration, more or less feasible depending on the historical period in question, was based in part on the capacity to weave family ties and to obtain the right to citizenship, subdivided according to various degrees. In all periods, however, Venice was characterized by the presence of foreigners and temporary immigrants from territories across the Venetian State, and one might wonder whether the family conduct of these "foreigners" influenced the structure of the Venetian family. Recent scholarship has investigated the consequences, in Venetian courtrooms, of the contrasts between different juridical traditions in the area of family law, both in the capital and in the *terraferma*.¹¹ Finally, in a city so open and so composite, where in the 18th century "the excessively licentious lifestyle of women" was bemoaned, new fashions and new ideas continued to arrive and to spread with great ease; these too had a profound influence on family behavior.¹²

In any society, the norms that regulate, define, and structure the family are a reflection of that society's economy, politics, social hierarchies, and history. If gender and generational hierarchies are a universal given, many nuances can be noted underneath the "patriarchal umbrella."¹³ For example, in the case of Venice, the equal division of the paternal property among sons, provided for by the statutes, is at the same time the foundation of a mercantile economy, in which all brothers were destined to set off to make their fortune along commercial routes, and of the republican political structure, in which the government was managed by a group of men who were each other's "equals." Women's property rights and their management on the part of judicial magistracies can be seen as a way of safeguarding those aspects of reciprocity in the matrimonial system that were themselves a keystone in the political-family system of the Republic. Whether, and to what extent, this affected women's role in Venetian

¹⁰ Trebbi, "La società"; Hunecke, *Il patriziato*; Chojnacki, "Families."

¹¹ Claudio Povolo, "Centro e periferia nella Repubblica di Venezia. Un profilo," in Giorgio Chittolini, Anthony Molho, and Pierangelo Schiera, eds., *Origini dello Stato. Processi di formazione statale in Italia fra Medioevo ed Età moderna* (Bologna, 1994), pp. 207–21.

¹² Plebani, "La socialità," p. 160.

¹³ Chojnacki, *Women and Men*, p. 6.

society is a topic that merits reflection.¹⁴ In the course of the early modern era, this abstract and entirely theoretical ideal of “proportion, measure, harmony” continued to be invoked, but also contradicted by the economic, social, and political reality, as will be seen in the first part of this essay, dedicated to the patriciate.¹⁵

Moving beyond the restricted confines of the governing class, we will progressively descend through the social ladders, discussing the “bourgeois” classes, that is to say, merchants, functionaries, and professionals. This is a composite group, joined together by the fact that they exercised a “honorable profession” and by a certain economic prosperity, and in many cases, characterized by wealth, culture, and relationships similar to those of the patriciate, but without exercising any political role. As in all urban societies of the *ancien régime*, this group is difficult to define. In the case of Venice, census data raise more questions than they answer, given that they isolate a specific category, the *cittadini* who in 1607 were defined as “lawyers, doctors, notaries and all those who exercise a honorable profession, and even non-noble priests when they are heads of households”: an interesting definition of “bourgeoisie” which notably excludes merchants, that is to say, one of the categories most heavily represented in the category of *cittadini*, juridically described. The *cittadini* of the censuses represent a percentage of the urban population that, until the first half of the 18th century, represented between 5 and 9 per cent of the population; this percentage then declined beginning in the 1760s, to 3–4 per cent.¹⁶

The rest of the population is defined, as has been recently noted, especially in negative terms, but nevertheless always represents between 80 and 90 per cent of the population and includes the most mobile categories,

¹⁴ Anna Bellavitis, *Famille, genre, transmission à Venise au XVI^e siècle* (Rome, 2008); Anna Bellavitis, Nadia Maria Filippini, and Tiziana Plebani, eds., *Spazi, poteri, diritti delle donne a Venezia in età moderna* (Verona, 1012); Chojnacki, *Women and Men*; Raines, *L'invention*; Anna Bellavitis, “Genere e potere politico tra Medioevo ed età moderna,” *Quaderni Storici* 118/1 (2005), 230–38; Isabelle Chabot, “Ricchezze femminili e parentela nel Rinascimento. Riflessioni intorno ai contesti fiorentini e veneziani,” *Quaderni Storici* 118/1 (2005), 203–29.

¹⁵ As Ludovico Flangini wrote in the 18th century, cited in Laura Megna, “Riflessi pubblici della crisi del patriziato veneziano nel XVIII secolo: il problema delle elezioni ai reggimenti,” in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato, società e giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (sec. XV–XVIII)*, 2 vols (Rome, 1985), 2, p. 257, note 3.

¹⁶ Zannini, “Un censimento”; Trebbi, “La società”; Anna Bellavitis, “‘Per cittadini metterete...’ La stratificazione della società veneziana cinquecentesca tra norma giuridica e riconoscimento sociale,” *Quaderni Storici* 89/2 (1995), 359–84; Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione*.

constantly replenished by immigration, both temporary and definitive.¹⁷ Historiography has dealt much less with the family behavior of artisans, sailors, and household servants than that of members of higher social classes and, in particular, of the patriciate. Nevertheless, there is no lack of sources, particularly judicial ones. The abundance of legislation on the family, and its application in the courtrooms of the Republic—aimed in part, as has been hypothesized, at the preservation of the governing class—are in fact issues concerning the population as a whole. Indeed, the sources are particularly rich and, as demonstrated by numerous studies, judicial sources offer a good opportunity for the study of the behavior of the popular classes.

The Patriciate

Family and Political Identity

Ever since the times of the *Prima Serrata*, patrician families occupied the political scene, given that membership in the *Maggior Consiglio* was hereditary. Beyond the criterion of legitimate birth, other criteria were progressively added for an increasingly precise definition of the identity of the patriciate. A series of laws enacted between the 15th and the 16th centuries excluded the sons of female slaves, servants, and even of women whose father or grandfather had exercised manual trades or had incurred infamous punishments. The increased requirements went along with the imposition of ever more precise controls and with the obligation to register marriages and births with the *Avogaria di Comun*. The patriciate's *Libro d'oro* was thus instituted in 1506. While a rigid class-based endogamy was never imposed, beginning at the end of the 16th century, women who were not themselves the legitimate daughters of patricians were asked to provide the *Avogaria di Comun* with proof of their father's and grandfather's "non-manual" activities. Between the end of the 16th century and the end of the 17th century, these were mostly the daughters of Venetian *cittadini*, daughters of nobles from the Venetian State, and illegitimate daughters of Venetian patricians. Patrician marriages were thus events that involved a constant redefinition of identity and of boundaries between social classes,

¹⁷ Andrea Zannini, "L'identità multipla: essere popolo in una capitale (Venezia, sec. XVI–XVIII)," *Ricerche storiche* 2/3 (2002), 247–62.

which also implicated the intervention of the state's magistracies and which produced archival sources of great interest.¹⁸

The progressive restriction of choice is to be contextualized within a family system in which access to marriage was also limited: the family structure of the Venetian *fraterna* did not permit all sons to marry; rather, in the course of the early modern era, the percentage of sons who had access to marriage progressively declined, a phenomenon that coincided with the evolution of the structure of wealth and of income sources of patrician families. In the 15th century, Francesco and Ermolao Barbaro had expressed antithetical opinions on the link between marriage and a political career. Indeed, Francesco, unlike Ermolao, considered marriage to be an essential prerequisite for a man's political identity. However, this debate, which is part of a wider humanistic tradition, must be contextualized within an economic structure in which the major sources of wealth of the political class were still derived from mercantile activities. The complex subdivision between political career and mercantile activity among members of the same family and within a single individual's life is a characteristic of the Venetian patriciate, and one which conditioned marital choices.

In 1420, concurrently with norms defining the limits of patrician exogamy, the first sumptuary law on dowries was promulgated, the only one among numerous laws on the topic to distinguish the dowries of patrician women and the dowries that women from popular classes brought to patrician husbands. Such norms were symptomatic of the will to define an *aurea mediocritas*, imposing both upper and lower limits. Even in the attempt—which was aimed at redefining hierarchies within the patrician class between new, old, and ducal families—to limit the squandering of wealth, such norms reveal the intent to make some exceptions, in order to allow for the influx of new wealth into the governing class. The proposal not to limit the dowries of women from the popular classes marrying patrician men was rejected, but a ceiling of 2000 ducats for such dowries was authorized, while dowries between patricians could not exceed 1600 ducats. Numerous other laws followed in the course of the 16th century, increasing the limits for the dowries of patricians, *cittadini*, and those “treated as such,” even though the law provided many loopholes and exceptions, particularly for widows and only daughters destined to inherit

¹⁸ Alexander Cowan, *Marriage, Manners and Mobility in Early Modern Venice* (Aldershot, 2007).

the family's patrimony. With the law of 1644, the limit for the dowries of the "*nobiles nostri*" reached the sum of 20,000 ducats, with no reference to other social classes.¹⁹ However, the limits imposed by law were rarely respected by the richest patricians and by those members of the bourgeoisie who aspired to forge alliances with the governing class.

The main preoccupation of the sumptuary laws was to limit the squandering of wealth on the part of the governing class, and it is significant that, between the 15th and the 17th centuries, a transition took place from an open definition subdivided according to social classes to a restrictive definition that included only patricians in the law, as if the dowries of bourgeois women who married noblemen were completely unregulated. In fact, before the 17th-century annexations, the only way to forge alliances in the governing class was to give a daughter in marriage to a member of the patriciate. A case in point is the merchant Giacomo Ragazzoni, whose nine daughters married patrician men at the end of the 16th century, with dowries amounting in total to 130,000 ducats, not to mention, at the beginning of the 17th century, the marriage between Francesco Grimani and Anna Maria Bergonzi, daughter of a silk merchant, with a dowry of 50,000 ducats, or the marriage between Girolamo Corner and Caterina Tilmans, the daughter of a Dutch merchant, with a dowry of 44,000 ducats.²⁰ Marital alliances proved to be particularly useful in the rare cases in which access to the patriciate was open, and many of the families that were able to purchase the title between 1645 and 1718 were already related by marriage with patrician families. For example, when the Zon family asked for and obtained admission into the *Maggior Consiglio* in 1651, they provided a list of 16 marriages contracted with patrician families between the 14th and the 16th centuries. Even for the period following the annexations, newly annexed families brought significant sums of money to ancient families in the form of dowries. This was only one of many expense categories that newly annexed people faced, beginning with the disbursement of 100,000 ducats that allowed access to the coveted title of patrician. In many cases, the accumulation of expenditures was fatal to the budget of these new families.²¹

¹⁹ Chojnacki, *Women and Men*; Bellavitis, *Identité*.

²⁰ Lucio Pezzolo, "Sistema di valori e attività economica a Venezia, 1530–1630," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *L'impresa. Industria commercio banca, secc. XIII–XVIII* (Florence, 1991), pp. 981–88; Hunecke, *Il patriziato*; Maartje Van Gelder, *Trading Places. The Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice* (Leiden/Boston, 2009).

²¹ Dorit Raines, "La dogressa erudita. Loredana Marcello Mocenigo tra sapere e potere," in Letizia Arcangeli and Susanna Peyronel, eds., *Donne di potere nel Rinascimento*

From the 15th century onward, the increasing value of dowries appeared to confer greater power and authority onto wives in patrician families, to the point that maternal bequests have been considered to be the primary factor contributing to the uncontrolled rise in dowries. While fathers were responsible for assigning dowries to their daughters, as a matter of fact, mothers contributed significantly to dowries. The economic weight, the “value,” of wives translated into the importance of the two lineages, the paternal and the maternal, and in determining sons’ political career or daughters’ matrimonial career. In a family system in which not all sons and daughters acceded to marriage, however, the careers of young patricians were also constructed on the basis of relationships not only with father and mother, but also with the unmarried maternal uncle, especially in the case of the father’s premature death. The “imperfect bilinearity” of Venetian successory legislation is documented also in the social and political behaviors of the governing class.²²

Dowry and Inheritance

Venetian successory laws privileged sons and male descendants in the transmission of real property, but patrician dowries also often included real property as well, excluding the family’s palace, which was kept whenever possible within the male hereditary axis. In any case, for a woman, having a rich dowry did not necessarily come with the possibility of managing it, given that this form of wifely property remained in the husband’s possession throughout the entire duration of the marriage. Often married very young to men who were by far their elders, patrician women who managed to survive numerous births were frequently widowed at a young age. Whereas in many cases they were “invited” by their husbands’ wills not to reclaim their dowries in case of widowhood, and not to remarry, the Venetian statutes facilitated the restitution of the dowry to widows, thus limiting the transfer of wealth from one family to another and enabling the maintenance of a balance among patrician households. These “restitutions” could give way to significant passages of real property from the

(Rome, 2008), pp. 375–404; Laura Megna, “Grandezza e miseria della nobiltà veneziana,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7 (1997): *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, pp. 161–200; Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Fortuna e sfortune di una famiglia veneziana nel Seicento. Gli Ottoboni al tempo dell’aggregazione al patriziato* (Venice, 1996).

²² Chojnacki, *Women and Men*; Donald E. Queller and Thomas F. Madden, “Father of the Bride: Fathers, Daughters and Dowries in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Venice,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 46/4 (Winter, 1993), 685–711; Bellavitis, *Identité*.

husband's family to the widow, and this property could in turn become part of her dowry in the event of remarriage.²³

The Venetian patriciate's successory practices in the early modern age have been the subject of important scholarly endeavors, especially in the case of studies focusing on single families. By contrast, those studies on the patriciate in general which have clarified the particularity of *fidei-commissary* practices have been carried out especially with reference to demography, in an attempt to understand the reasons for, and modalities of, the drop in participation in the *Maggior Consiglio*.²⁴ Until the mid-16th century, patrician families tended to form new branches, marriages of sons were more frequent, and the family's mercantile capital was distributed among sons. The reduction in mercantile opportunities and the tendency to increase investment in real estate, phenomena that characterized the 16th-century Venetian economy, led to a drastic limitation of marriages in order to keep the family's land holdings intact; however, this did not necessarily translate into the introduction of privilege based on primogeniture. Unlike noble classes elsewhere, the Venetian patriciate tended to privilege the unit of sons grouped into a *fraterna* rather than a single son in *fidei-commissary* succession, even though only one was destined for marriage and legitimate reproduction. The Venetian originality lies in the choice to join together a practice typical of landed nobility, the *fidei-commissum*, with the tradition of a mercantile Republic, or rather the egalitarian division of wealth. Sons had to live together and designate as heirs the legitimate sons of the only brother chosen for marriage: these forms of cohabitation stirred up surprise and admiration in the accounts of foreign travelers even at the end of the 18th century. However, it was especially the richest patrician families who followed this pattern, while

²³ Chojnacki, *Women and Men*; Jean-François Chauvard, *La circulation des biens à Venise. Stratégies patrimoniales et marché immobilier (1600–1750)* (Rome, 2005); Anna Bellavitis and Isabelle Chabot, "People and Property in Florence and Venice," in Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, eds., *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2006), pp. 76–85.

²⁴ James C. Davis, *A Venetian Family and its Fortune, 1500–1900* (Philadelphia, 1975); Giuseppe Gullino, *I Pisani dal Banco e Moretta. Storia di due famiglie veneziane in età moderna e delle loro vicende patrimoniali tra 1705 e 1836* (Rome, 1984); Renzo Derosas, "I Querini Stampalia. Vicende patrimoniali dal Cinque all'Ottocento," in Giorgio Busetto and Madile Gambier, eds., *I Querini Stampalia. Un ritratto di famiglia nel Settecento veneziano* (Venice, 1987), pp. 43–87; Renzo Derosas, "La crisi del patriziato come crisi del sistema familiare: I Foscari ai Carmini nel secondo Settecento," in *Studi veneti offerti a Gaetano Cozzi* (Venice, 1992), pp. 309–31; Laura Casella, *I Savorgnan. La famiglia e le opportunità del potere* (Rome, 2003); James C. Davis, *The Decline of the Venetian Nobility as a Ruling Class* (Baltimore, 1962); Hunecke, *Il patriziato*.

less wealthy patricians, at the end of the 18th century, had all their sons marry, precisely in order to profit from the wives' dowries.²⁵

One of the most important consequences of the matrimonial system described up to this point is the forced monachization of daughters. Young patrician men not destined for marriage found other solutions, from concubinage to clandestine marriage with women from all social classes. By contrast, for young women, the alternative to marriage was almost invariably the convent, and only seldom some form of semi-lay spinsterhood in the father's home.²⁶ Limiting marriages also meant limiting births, and indeed, at the end of the 18th century, the patriciate's demographic crisis was evident. From the beginning of the 16th century to the end of the 18th, the percentage of patricians within the population declined from 8–10 per cent to just over 2 per cent.²⁷ In a social system in which the procreation of legitimate offspring is considered almost a burden and a family obligation, yet at the same time a privilege reserved for few, a great degree of discipline is required on the part of those involved. Such discipline must be founded on shared values and ideals, in addition to a social consensus that lies outside the limits of the patrician class. In the first decades of the 16th century, some wills of women belonging to the artisan class present some interesting surprises. In the will she prepared on 3 February 1547, Chiaretta Bonassi, the pregnant wife of a jeweler, designated two executors: the *magnifico messer* Francesco Querini, and Polo, son of herself and of Francesco. She appointed as heir Querina, daughter of herself and of Francesco, along with another child of Francesco Querini, to whom she was about to give birth. On 20 September 1548, Stella Negro, the pregnant daughter of a "trousers' cutter," prepared a will, entrusting the son or daughter who was about to be born to the "magnifico messere Piero Gritti... for being his."²⁸ In their mothers' intentions, these illegitimate children were destined to be integrated into the patrician family and, for

²⁵ Hunecke, *Il patriziato*; Francesca Meneghetti Casarin, "Diseducazione patrizia, diseducazione plebea: un dibattito nella Venezia del Settecento," *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 18 (1989), 117–56.

²⁶ Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago/London, 1999); Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice* (London, 2002); Federica Ambrosini, "Toward a Social History of Women in Venice from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment," in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered* (Baltimore/London, 2000), pp. 420–53.

²⁷ Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione*; Zannini, "Un censimento"; Maria Teresa Todesco, "Andamento demografico della nobiltà veneziana allo specchio delle votazioni nel Maggior Consiglio (1297–1797)," *Ateneo Veneto* 176 (1989), 119–64.

²⁸ Bellavitis, *Famille*, p. 139.

that matter, at least in the first case mentioned, the last name and even the given name came from the father's family. The practice of giving the daughter a name modeled on the father's last name, which she would inevitably lose once she married, was typical of the aristocracy, a factor which in this particular case might lead to the conclusion that the father had accepted her integration into the family. For that matter, to be an illegitimate son or daughter of a Venetian patrician was a perfectly allowed and socially accepted identity, even in those cases in which legitimate birth was a criterion which could not be disregarded by all others.²⁹ These were women married off to men from the artisan class, yet who for many years had been lovers or even companions of a patrician man. In some cases, when their patrician lovers decided to follow the pattern marked by the family of origin, these women rebelled against their destiny. Sometimes, their requests for separation from a husband they had not chosen was accepted by the ecclesiastic court. A century later, many young patricians, urged on by the climate of the Counter Reformation to regularize these situations and marry their concubines, chose the formula of the "secret marriage," which did not permit offspring to bear their father's name nor to inherit his possessions.³⁰

In the 18th century, the family values and political ideals upon which the social system was founded began to waver: the *fraterne* split up more and more frequently; fathers more often privileged one single heir; and sons refused compulsory bachelorhood, arranged marriages, and sometimes even the institution of marriage itself.³¹ Clandestine marriages and love-based marriages, formed against the wishes of the family of origin, were phenomena typical of the century. However, when young patricians chose these options, their membership in the *Maggior Consiglio* was at stake, as was their descendants' political identity, along with the destiny of their family's name and, ultimately, of the family itself. The lack of registration of marriages and births in the registers of the *Avogaria di Comun*, an unavoidable consequence of these choices, must in part urge us to reevaluate the patriciate's demographic crisis: perhaps it was less

²⁹ Andrea Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: i cittadini originari (sec. XVI–XVIII)* (Venice, 1993); Cowan, *Marriage*.

³⁰ Ferraro, *Marriage War*; Cozzi, "Padri"; Ambrosini, "Toward a Social History."

³¹ Gaetano Cozzi, "Note e documenti sulla questione del 'divorzio' a Venezia (1782–1788)," *Annali dell'Istituto italo-germanico in Trento* 7 (1981), 275–360; Luca De Biase, *Amore di Stato. Venezia, Settecento* (Palermo, 1992); Laura Megna, "Comportamenti abitativi del patriato veneziano (1582–1740)," *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 22 (1991), 253–324; Meneghetti Casarin, "Diseducazione."

a matter of demographic suicide than of political suicide. In most cases, it was poor patricians who married outside of their social class and who failed to register their marriages with the *Avogaria di Comun*, but when a Foscarini ai Carmini or a Savorgnan rebelled against tradition by marrying lower-class women, perhaps even actresses or dancers, they ignited scandal and disappointment, sometimes provoking action on the part of the state's major magistracies.³²

Rebellion against family choices sometimes manifested itself even on the part of young patrician women. In 1788, Cattaruzza Grimani reported to the *Inquisitori di Stato* "the tyrannical directions of my relatives," appealing to the "powerful paternal authority of my most just prince."³³

The "Bourgeois" Classes

The Uncertain Boundaries of the Class of Cittadini and Its Frustrations

Underneath the governing class, the social composition of that which could be called the "bourgeoisie" was particularly diverse and mutable, in Venice as elsewhere. Defined by the exercise of honorable activities, that is, non-manual trades, and by a certain degree of economic prosperity, the "bourgeois" classes in Venice overlapped only in part with the juridical definition of *cittadini*. The latter title was a privilege conceded to those who could demonstrate that they had resided and paid taxes in the city for a certain number of years. Additionally, it was a collection of rights granted to those Venetians recognized as *originari*. Indeed, there were two types of citizenship privilege: "*de intus tantum*," which could be obtained after 15 years of residence and which authorized to "*mercari Venetiis*"; and "*de intus et extra*," which could be obtained after 25 years and which permitted commerce with the Levant, with the same duty exemptions as Venetian *cittadini originari*. The extension, beginning in the 15th century, of the privilege "*de intus tantum*" to citizens of the Republic's subject cities led to a progressive decrease in citizenship privileges, which waned to a few cases per year. The candidates were, in the first case, artisan-entrepreneurs who wished to trade in their own productions and,

³² Cozzi, "Padri"; Hunecke, *Il patriziato*; Derosas, "La crisi"; Casella, *I Savorgnan*.

³³ Cited in Tiziana Plebani, "Ragione di Stato e sentimenti nel Settecento," in Anna Bellavitis, Nadia Maria Filippini, and Tiziana Plebani, eds., *Spazi, poteri, diritti delle donne a Venezia in età moderna* (Verona, 2012), pp. 117–34; cf. also Ambrosini, "Toward a Social History"; and Tiziana Plebani, "Socialità e protagonismo femminile nel secondo Settecento," in Nadia Maria Filippini, ed., *Donne sulla scena pubblica. Società e politica in Veneto tra Sette e Ottocento* (Milan, 2006), pp. 25–80.

in the second case, international merchants. In order to support the legitimacy of their requests, both groups insisted on the fact that they had married Venetian women or that they had given their daughters' hands in marriage to Venetian *cittadini*. Marriage was always a catalyst of social integration, but, in this case, one would also appeal to a law of 1407, modified in 1552, which facilitated the granting of citizenship to those men who had married a "*Venetam habitatricem Venetiarum*."³⁴

The definition of what constituted *cittadinanza originaria* grew progressively more complicated between the medieval period and the early modern period. In fact, at the end of the 16th century, there was a *cittadinanza originaria* that granted some customs privileges to second-generation natives, as well as one that gave access to posts in the state's bureaucracy and, in particular, to the ducal Chancellery, to third-generation natives who could demonstrate their own, their father's, and their grandfather's legitimate birth as well as provide proof that the family had not carried out manual trades over the past three generations. Between 1569 and 1720, 2789 candidates obtained such a title, and, particularly in the earlier part of this period, many were the natural sons of patricians (about one-fifth between 1570 and 1644). It was the only case in which the rule of legitimate birth was not followed. The laws and procedures put into practice beginning in 1569 allowed for the creation of a bureaucratic elite precisely in those years when, due to the change in the international economic equilibrium, Venetian *originari* encountered escalating challenges in commerce, that is to say, the activity that had historically characterized their identity. The social origins of those neo-*originari* demonstrate the city's economic evolution and the progressive closing off of the bureaucratic class: sons of merchants declined progressively, while sons of functionaries or of members of the professions increased in number.³⁵

³⁴ Zannini, "Il pregiudizio"; Anna Bellavitis, "*Ars mechanica* e gerarchie sociali a Venezia tra XVI e XVII secolo," in Mathieu Arnoux and Pierre Monnet, eds., *Le "technicien" dans la cité en Europe occidentale (1250-1650)* (Rome, 2004), pp. 161-79; Luca Molà and Reinhold C. Mueller, "Essere straniero a Venezia nel tardo Medioevo: accoglienza e rifiuto nei privilegi di cittadinanza e nelle sentenze criminali," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *Le migrazioni in Europa (secc. XIII-XVIII)* (Florence, 1994), pp. 839-51; Reinhold C. Mueller, "*Veneti facti privilegio*: stranieri naturalizzati a Venezia tra XIV e XVI secolo," in Donatella Calabi and Paola Lanaro, eds., *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri* (Bari, 1998), pp. 41-51; James S. Grubb, "Elite citizens," in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered* (Baltimore/London, 2000), pp. 339-64; Bellavitis, *Identité*; Reinhold C. Mueller, *Immigration and Citizenship in Medieval Venice* (Rome, 2010).

³⁵ Matteo Casini, "La cittadinanza originaria a Venezia tra i secoli XV e XVI. Una linea interpretativa," in *Studi veneti offerti a Gaetano Cozzi*, pp. 133-50; Trebbi, "La società"; Zannini, *Burocrazia*; Bellavitis, *Identité*.

In pursuing the title of *cittadino originario*, it was also useful to demonstrate that one had forged matrimonial ties with the patrician class, as the case of Gian Carlo Scaramella demonstrates: in 1606, Scaramella attached to the petition he presented to the *Avogaria di Comun* a list of women from his family who had married patricians over the centuries, along with the sum paid for dowries, almost as if to suggest that the family had “paid” its dues to the political class. A few years later, Alessandro Ziliol, Venetian *cittadino originario* and son of a patrician mother, wrote that “from now on, nobody will be able to gain in riches or in nobility by means of commerce,” accusing the patriciate of preventing social mobility in order to seize the wealth of the Venetian populace “by means of family ties.” These were very serious allegations, which revealed all the frustrations of a “popular gentleman.” Between the 16th and 17th centuries, the old Venetian families, which, like the Ziliol family, boasted their descent from families excluded from the *Serrata* of the *Maggior Consiglio*, were transitioning from commerce towards office-holding, private income, and professions. Progressively, however, the difficulty in finding candidates who fit all the necessary requirements led to an increased flexibility in the recruitment of functionaries. The result was a greater social fluidity but also the monopolization of increasingly elitist positions on the part of the most ancient families.³⁶

Alessandro Ziliol had coined the phrase “popular gentlemen” to define families such as his. This definition recalled the bifurcation of Venetian society between patriciate and *popolo* proposed in the first decades of the 16th century by one of the major authors of the “myth of Venice,” Gasparo Contarini, who had situated the *cittadini* in the “most honest part of the *popolo*.” For Ziliol, in contrast, *cittadini* were part of the nobility, divided between “gentlemen of the *Consiglio*” and “popular gentlemen.” Even the 18th-century writings of foreign observers provide analogous definitions, which confirm how new social identities and hierarchies were formed in the face of the impossibility, for the most ancient families which were not wealthy enough, to gain access to the patriciate. Furthermore, Ziliol adds an interesting annotation when he writes that the *Serrata* reduced “to the status of families many noble lineages and persons who, as happens in Republics, were not included in that number” and gave rise to the rank of the *cittadini*. More specifically, these “lineages” represent the public and

³⁶ Bellavitis, *Identité*, pp. 83 and 342; Andrea Zannini, “La presenza borghese,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7, *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Benzoni and Cozzi, pp. 225–72.

political aspect of the “families”: the patriciate, reserving the government for itself, also reserved the right to organize itself into lineages, while *cittadini* were left only with the family. Once again, Alessandro Ziliol was engaging in a dialogue with Gasparo Contarini, who one century earlier had described the honors conferred on “*plebei*” who “*parum honori student, sed potius rei familiaris studio inserviunt*.”³⁷

Mercantile Fraterne

In the Venetian merchant class, even beyond the patriciate, the *fraterna* represented the fundamental economic structure. Exceptions aside, all brothers were involved, along with the father, in the family company, which had to be passed on to future generations, according to various modalities: at times, only one of the brothers accepted the “charge” of marrying and starting a family, and others granted this readily to him, as Andrea Ziliol wrote at the beginning of the 16th century, specifying that he had not wished to marry because it was his “predilection” to travel. He had thus left the task to his brother Vettor, who had received from his wife Lugretia Reverti a dowry of 2000 ducats, “which is quite a fine dowry at the present time.” In other cases, as happened to the Bortolussi, glass-makers from Murano, all seven brothers married; their wives’ dowries were integrated into the capital of the *fraterna*; and the sons progressively followed their fathers into the company. Between 1562 and 1574, Elisabetta Gritti, the childless wife of Francesco Bortolussi, made at least three wills: in the first, she named her husband as heir; in the second, which she made after her husband’s death, her dowry was destined to his five brothers, who composed the *fraterna*; and in the third, to her nieces, daughters of her sister Pierina, widow of Piero Bortolussi. The evolution of Elisabetta’s testamentary choices, which may appear to tend towards a progressive “emancipation” from the closed structure of the *fraterna*, in reality allowed a balance to be maintained between the *fraterna*’s component parts, that is to say, between center—the brothers and their sons— and periphery—the wives and their daughters.³⁸

Surprising formulas sometimes appear in the wills of merchants’ wives, such as, for example, “that my daughter should do as she wishes, and if anyone objects, may he be deprived of my bequest.” The risk run by

³⁷ Zannini, *Burocrazia*; Bellavitis, *Identité*, pp. 310 and 342.

³⁸ Bellavitis, *Identité*, pp. 288 and 340; pp. 269–73.

these merchants' daughters was to be confined to a convent, because the mother's dowry, which always played a role—even if not invariably a major one—in the formation of the daughter's dowry, remained frozen in the capital of the *fraterna*. Such passionate defenses of daughters' liberties were in reality efforts aimed at preventing forced monachization, which, in any case, was not an inconsequential task during such a period of Counter-reformation.³⁹

Within the merchants' logic, marriage was always a means to widen one's business contacts and even to form new commercial companies, especially in the absence of sons. It was quite common at the time to start a company with one's son-in-law, and in this case, marriage contracts closely resembled business charter contracts. In 1543, the soap-maker Ambrogio di Giacomo arranged a marriage between his legitimated natural daughter Bonetta and Francesco di Varisco. The contract included the stipulation of a "union and company" between father-in-law and son-in-law, "for the common benefit and ill, in equal parts." Legitimizing natural children or including them among ones successors was a way to ward off the extinction not only of the family line but also of the commercial company. In 1568, a merchant named Zuan Antonio Bianchini designated a natural son as heir, specifying: "I declare that my Santa of this house is my true wife, taken in praise of God . . . quite some time before the Council of Trent." However, by constraining the son of this union with his "lady of this house" to remain under his brother's authority until the rather exceptional age of 40 (usually such tutelage extended until 25 or 30 years of age), this merchant implicitly seemed to concede the irregularity of his son's origins.⁴⁰

A family's destiny could also be entrusted to ones confraternity, which in such a case played the role of "substitute family" to the fullest extent. In 1524, after designating as heirs a natural son of his brother and two nephews, the merchant Girolamo Grifalconi ordered his descendants to adopt young *cittadini* "of good family," but in no event the children of patricians, if they remained without heirs. Finally, he entrusted to the *Scuola Grande della Misericordia* the task of choosing three youths to whom to entrust the name and assets of the Grifalconi *fraterna*, in the event that in future generations his descendants were unable to do so. At the end of the 18th century, there still existed a Grifalconi *fraterna*, perhaps at some point

³⁹ Bellavitis, *Famille*, pp. 169 et seqq.

⁴⁰ Bellavitis, *Identité*, p. 238, and *Famille*, p. 149.

recreated by the members of the *Scuola*. The *fraterna's* appeal to family unity, an economic necessity in addition to a fundamental part of its identity, was very frequent in merchants' wills, but it was equally frequent that fathers foresaw the possibility of a separation between the brothers and attempted to resist or organize it. In 1570, Agostino Prezato, merchant and draper, made a will after the death of his brother, with whom he shared a mercantile company, and, while he expressed the desire that his brothers and nephews remain united, he left all necessary instructions for the division of capitals and goods, as had occurred when his brother had gone to study in Rome, where his father had purchased two offices for him.⁴¹

Beyond the Fraterna: Individual Destinies and Choices

Mercantile, professional, and bureaucratic environments were tightly interwoven, and it is often difficult to define in relation to one single sphere of economic interest a family in which various activities coexisted. The functionaries of the Republic tended to intermarry within the same social class, that is, when they did not orient their matrimonial choices towards the daughters of nobles or doctors from the *terraferma* who wished to weave ties in the capital, or when they were not able to contract matrimonial ties with patrician families.

Marriage was not the result of free choice even for males, but sometimes signs of uneasiness can be detected. In his family's chronicle, Alessandro Ziliol recounted that, at the end of the 16th century, a sort of "race" arose among his uncles to determine which one would have children, and that their first division had been determined precisely by one brother's decision to marry. Instead, this brother had been destined for bachelorhood and to remain in the house with the other brothers, where, as one surmises from the rest of the chronicle, he could procreate with servant-girls and concubines children who might eventually join his brother's family.⁴²

Even in the sphere of succession, one perceives the opening up of individual choices. The will of Girolamo Zuccato, secretary of the Senate, presents itself before our eyes as uncannily modern, in addition to running completely counter to the tendencies represented by the image of the *fidei-commisum* as a normal modality for thinking about one's succession beginning in the second half of the 16th century: "When my son will reach twenty years of age," he wrote in 1562, "he will be able to change or

⁴¹ Bellavitis, *Identité*, pp. 129 et seqq., and *Famille*, p. 153.

⁴² Bellavitis, *Identité*, pp. 301–03 and 351

renew this will as if it had never been made and then to make a new one as he sees fit; . . . and I say this because of the profound changes that the world undergoes from one day to the next in all of its things." It seems that the chosen affections counted more than predefined family roles. Perhaps this will is a sign that something was changing and that, in some settings, uncertainty about the future, about succession, and about transmission could be accepted and taken into account without the need to confront it by orchestrating complicated strategies whose outcome was uncertain. The ideal of the *fraterna*, by this time devoid of mercantile justifications, remained alive nevertheless, even in these bourgeois classes. Indeed, fathers resorted to classicizing metaphors, as in the case of the doctor Francesco Longo, who, in his attempt to persuade his sons to remain united, reminded them that "the arrows of Artaserse are more effective if they are all propelled together" and asked them to "act as if they had no inheritance, so that they may become skilled at an activity, to earn their bread and to try to live on their work and their virtue." Honesty, virtue, and study are the words that recur constantly in wills and were values that fathers wished to transmit to their sons.⁴³

Even maternal dowries were called upon to contribute directly to sons' careers, in a family context in which the dowry was often the main form of wealth that could be mobilized, not only for daughters' dowries but also for sons' educational endeavors. Maternal wills within these groups exhibit a strong awareness of one's economic "value," which often translated into the desire to make decisions regarding sons' careers. The will of Andriana Uberti, daughter of Antonio, ducal secretary, and wife of Bonifacio Antelmi, also a ducal secretary, focused entirely on the careers of the two sons. Nevertheless, this mother, who had no daughters, maintained her immovable goods in an indissoluble and perpetual *fidei-commissum*, so as to prevent her sons from dispersing her goods but also enable their introduction into society and into the workplace. In 1593, Andriana Uberti wrote that "they must dedicate themselves to some task or exercise, and those who shall not do so will lose the rights to my bequests," but, above all, she added: "it is my will that my sons and descendants lose the benefit of my revenues if they shall not pay the taxes due to the city." This was a strong claim to Venetian identity, an identity based on service to the State, which is particularly striking in a woman's will.⁴⁴

⁴³ Bellavitis, *Famille*, pp. 186 and 180.

⁴⁴ Bellavitis, *Famille*, p. 196.

For daughters, the choice between marriage and monachization remained open, and the outcome could not necessarily be predicted. Mothers regularly made significant bequests for their daughters' dowries or monachization but seemed less preoccupied than merchants' wives about defending their daughters' freedom of choice. When faced with the choice regarding their sons' or daughters' destiny, fathers did not stop short even of putting their libraries up for sale: Benedetto Arborsani decided to "save" the law books for his grandsons and to sell the literature collection, along with the books in the vernacular, in order to fund his granddaughters' dowries.⁴⁵ The higher on the social scale, the higher the stakes: the spouses' respective contributions at the moment of marriage were needed not for the formation of a mercantile capital but to confirm and, rather, increase the family's symbolic and social capital.

Apparently, however, individual choices grew more and more difficult to control, and we might ask ourselves whether a new model of the family, albeit still an abstract one, was being constructed in these social, bourgeois groups. The presence in these social sectors of learned women—able to hold discussions with philosophers and literary figures of the age; capable, like Lucrezia Marinelli, of writing and publishing treatises on the excellence of the female sex; or, like "the honest courtesan" Veronica Franco, daughter of a Venetian *cittadino*, works of poetry; or, like Moderata Fonte, dialogues, poised between serious and facetious in their tone, on the role of women in Venetian society; or, yet again, like the nun Arcangela Tarabotti, vehement indictments against the condition of women—was an important signal, albeit within a family and social system in which women had scarcely any room for autonomy. In the mid-17th century, Arcangela Tarabotti, criticizing the "Ragion di Stato" [Reasons of State] that pushed for daughters' enclosure in convents, "for, if all were to marry, the noble class would proliferate excessively, depleting households with the expense of numerous dowries," accused a system in which "political interests have obliterated the justice of sentiments"! She herself was one of the many victims of such a system, although she was not from a patrician family.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Bellavitis, *Famille*, p. 184.

⁴⁶ Patricia H. Labalme, "Venetian Women on Women: Three Early Modern Feminists," *Archivio Veneto*, 5th ser., 117 (1981), 81–109; Virginia Cox, "The Single Self: Feminist Thought and the Marriage Market in Early Modern Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48.3 (Autumn, 1995), 513–81; Paola Malpezzi Price, *Moderata Fonte. Women and Life in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Madison and Cranbury, N.J./London, 2003); Margaret Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago,

*Popular-Class Families and Labor**Geographic, Social, and Family Mobility*

In Venice, the labor force was constantly renewed by immigration, both temporary and permanent. Thanks to government policies favoring the immigration of artisans, the city was repopulated after the epidemics of the 14th, 16th, and 17th centuries. The balance between the necessary openness and protection of local privileges was not, however, easy to safeguard, at all levels of society. Thus, the government enacted a series of provisions, sometimes in contradiction with each other, in order to reserve some positions in guilds for Venetians or even in order to limit the presence of some categories of immigrants, such as, for instance, those from Bergamo in the *Arte della Seta* between the 15th and 16th centuries. Along the same lines, there were some guilds that were both “national” and professional, such as in the sectors of bread-making and glass-making. The competition between immigrant and local workers extended to the modalities of recruitment of manpower, for immigrants tended to privilege their own fellow countrymen and to offer incentives for their influx into the city. In particular, those from Bergamo reserved the lion’s share for their own compatriots, and their biographies, reconstructed by means of judicial records, describe the vicissitudes of young men who left the Lombard valleys “with only the skin on their bones,” in the footsteps of an uncle or sometimes paying an intermediary to convey them towards the capital and introduce them to the labor market. Once arrived in Venice, these immigrants tracked down cousins or uncles who had arrived before them.⁴⁷

The wide variety of occupations and of levels of wealth within the “popular” classes defeat any attempt at generalization. The fragmentation of Venetian guilds, according to the phases of manufacturing any given product, for example in the textile industry, certainly prevented dangerous

1992); Francesca Medioli, *L'Inferno monacale di Arcangela Tarabotti* (Turin, 1990), note on p. 93.

⁴⁷ Molà and Mueller, “Essere Stranieri”; Richard Mackenney, *Tradesmen and Traders. The World of the Guilds in Venice and Europe, c.1250–1650* (London, 1987); Francesca Trivellato, *Fondamenta dei vetrai. Lavoro, tecnologia e mercato a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Rome, 2000); Paola Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre of the Old World. Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland, 1400–1800* (Toronto, 2006); Andrea Vianello, *L'arte dei calegheri e zavateri di Venezia tra XVII e XVIII secolo* (Venice, 1993); Zannini, “L'altra Bergamo in laguna: la comunità bergamasca a Venezia,” in Marco Cattini and Marzio A. Romani, eds., *Storia economica e sociale di Bergamo*, vol. 3, part 2 (Bergamo, 1998), pp. 175–93.

concentrations of manpower, even if it did not prevent episodes of organized rebellion and outright strikes. However, naturally, the artisan world was not entirely organized into guilds, and conspicuously absent from the guild system were many trades fundamental to the city, from sailors to household servants and the greater part of the female workforce. Social mobility within the popular classes was, however, a concrete possibility, and the boundaries between artisan and mercantile classes were extremely faint, as demonstrated by the careers of those who aspired to the privilege of citizenship described in their petitions to the *Provveditori di Comun* in the 16th century.⁴⁸

Any generalization regarding family forms is just as impossible, even if studies undertaken thus far demonstrate that, unlike patrician and richer bourgeois families, artisan families were usually neolocal and nuclear, which certainly does not constitute a surprise. At the same time, the greater presence in peripheral and popular parishes of family units comprised of isolated individuals was in part a consequence of immigration but can also be translated into the development of networks of mutual support among neighbors, especially in the case of illness or old age, and therefore in specific forms of sociability that differed from those present in large families. The integration of young immigrants took place first and foremost by means of apprenticeship and domestic service contracts, two types of work relations that, while different in principle, often tended to overlap. In some cases, the work or apprenticeship contracts of youths and children even could transform into adoptions. On the whole, one can conclude that families from the artisan and popular classes were marked by geographic and interfamily mobility.⁴⁹

Apprenticeship and Domestic Service

In some cases, medieval guild statutes specified the duration of apprenticeships or the minimum age to enter into the guild. For example, in the case of masons, the apprenticeship period was seven years; in order to enter into the glass-makers' guild, the minimum age was 14 years; but in the 18th century, in order to be a member of the shoemakers' guild, one had to be

⁴⁸ Zannini, "L'identità"; Giorgetta Bonfiglio Dosio, "Le arti cittadine," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2: *L'età del comune*, ed. Cracco and Ortalli, pp. 577–625; Ugo Tucci, "Carriere popolari e dinastie di mestiere," in Annalisa Guarducci, ed., *Gerarchie economiche e gerarchie sociali, secoli XII–XVIII* (Florence, 1990), pp. 817–51; Bellavitis, *Identité*.

⁴⁹ Chojnacka, *Working Women*; Romano, *Housecraft*; Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, "Sopra le acque salse." *Espace, pouvoir et société à Venise à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Rome, 1992).

older than 18 years of age. Between the 17th and 18th centuries, the periods of apprenticeship, while they varied somewhat according to trade and the age of the apprentices, were between four and five years, except in the cases of certain trades, such as those pertaining to sewing (tailors, hatters, etc.) and personal care (barbers, hairdressers, etc.), whose duration was about two and a half years. At the end of the contract, the youth received salary but had no guarantee of access to the career represented by the guild. In fact, in the early modern age, in many sectors, access to the guild was reserved to the sons and sometimes the widows of master guildsmen: at the end of the 18th century, more than one-third of apprenticeships in the shoemakers' guild were sons of master guildsmen.⁵⁰

Female apprenticeship was less widespread, but at the end of the 16th century, there were some 12-year-old female apprentices employed with contracts longer than six years in some sectors of the silk industry. The presence of more orphan girls than orphan boys among apprentices seems to confirm a hypothesis already formulated elsewhere, that is, that female apprenticeship was a fall-back choice, in situations of social vulnerability. Much more frequent for girls were domestic service contracts, to which sometimes was added the learning of some specific ability. With the backing of her older brother, whom she had followed into the capital, a young girl who arrived from the *terraferma* would find employment with a family whose female head was to teach her "all that which a woman must know," including silk-weaving and the manufacture of ribbons and handkerchiefs. Such a mistress could even bear the name of the "magnifica madonna" Andriana Morosini, widow of the "clarissimo" Gabriel, and exercise the "business and trade" of silk, for in Venice, as in Cologne in the 15th century, patrician women could "engage in the trade" of silk fabrics.⁵¹

Evidently, for generations there had also existed in Venice a solid artisan base, particularly in luxury trades, but in these families also the mobility of young people could be important. In fact, Venetian goldsmiths, tailors, and silk-workers often sent their sons to learn the trade from other colleagues in the city, in order to weave networks of relationships but also because they considered this to be a better way to educate them.

⁵⁰ Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione*; Vianello, *L'arte*; Walter Panciera, "Emarginazione femminile tra politica salariale e modelli di organizzazione del lavoro nell'industria tessile veneta nel XVIII secolo," in Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *La donna nell'economia, secc. XIII–XVIII* (Florence, 1990), pp. 585–96.

⁵¹ Romano, *Housecraft*; Anna Bellavitis, "Apprentissages masculins, apprentissages féminins à Venise au XVI^e siècle," *Histoire Urbaine* 15 (2006), 49–63, 71.

In the mid-16th century, the patrician and knight Zuan Maria Memmo offered very precise instructions in this regard, advising fathers to send their sons to learn the trade in the houses of others, in part because “without the paternal shadow” they would become “much better masters,” but also concerned to entrust them to “humane men and not to cruel beasts” capable of beating their young apprentices to the point of “killing them, crippling them, or making them stupid and crazy.”⁵²

Depending on economic and demographic circumstances, laws established the number of apprentices that each master could keep in his house. For example, between June and July of 1582, a few years after the plague, Paolo, a belt-maker, hired three female apprentices; he must not have treated them well, for a year later, two of them had already run away and the third was to run away in April 1584. Children and youths did not always live in the master’s house; at times, they went there only during the day. Between June 1582 and September 1583, Andriana, seamstress and wife of a baker, hired three boys between the ages of six and 11 years and four girls between the ages of nine and 13 years as apprentices. These very young apprentices did not live in their mistress’s house, nor did she feed them. In the sewing trades, apprentices were very young children of both sexes, but in other trades, between the end of the 16th century and the end of the 18th century, the most frequent age for males to enter into the apprenticeship was around 14 years. For girls, at the end of the 16th century, the most frequent age was 12 years.⁵³ The age at the end of the apprenticeship was, therefore, on average, between 19 and 20 years for males and between 17 and 18 for females. We can thus consider this the age at which these youths from the popular classes could begin to think of marriage.

Home and Shop

To leave the master craftsman’s or employer’s house to “set up house” on one’s own was no simple endeavor. It has been calculated that in the

⁵² Giovanni Maria Memmo, *Dialogo del magnifico cavaliere messer Gio. Maria Memmo* (Venice, 1563), pp. 121–22. On escaping and workplace conflicts, cf. James E. Shaw, *The Justice of Venice. Authorities and Liberties in the Urban Economy, 1550–1700* (Oxford, 2006).

⁵³ Anna Bellavitis, “Le travail des femmes dans les contrats d’apprentissage de la Giustizia Vecchia (Venise, XVI^e siècle),” in Isabelle Chabot, Jérôme Hayez, and Didier Lett, eds., *Le travail, les femmes et le quotidien (XIV^e–XVIII^e siècle). Textes offerts à Christiane Klapisch-Zuber* (Paris, 2006), pp. 188, 192; Beltrami, *La popolazione*; Vianello, *L’arte*; Bellavitis, “Apprentissages”; Anna Bellavitis and Linda Guzzetti, eds., *Donne, lavoro, economia a Venezia e in Terraferma tra medioevo ed età moderna*, special issue of *Archivio Veneto*, 3 (2012).

mid-16th century, when a maidservant earned an average of 5 ducats per year and dowries in this group of female workers were on average 98 ducats, it would have taken at least 20 years to scrape together a dowry, if the young bride were to rely solely on her own resources. In reality, this was not necessarily the case, particularly when it came to maidservants, who, rather than earning a regular salary, were kept in the master's house and often received a dowry at the end of the term of service. In their wills, members of the nobility, the bourgeoisie, and the merchant class who left their maidservants the salary due to them also made it clear that sometimes the credit these workers held with their masters could be protracted for a long time and generate situations of prolonged dependence, from which it could become difficult to emerge. In addition to bequests by masters, young women from the popular classes could count on dowry contributions provided by the many Venetian charitable organizations. The importance of the dowry should be noted, as a symbol of female honor, in a context in which in reality husbands and wives contributed in equal measure, with their work, to the support of the family. The dowry, however, composed essentially of the trousseau, was needed to "set up house," and in Venice, in fact, it was generally the custom for brides to furnish the matrimonial bed.⁵⁴

By contrast, in marriage contracts within these social classes, the husband often endeavored to pay a sum of money, called counter-dowry, to the wife in case she were to remain a widow, a practice that was much less frequent in the rest of the population. The couple was the primary economic partnership, and artisan husbands and wives often shared house and shop alike. The wills of artisans' wives that make bequests to "our shop boys," or to the "pupils," apprentices who had by this time become family members, or wills of artisans that left their wives and daughters the instruments relating to the trade and the shop confirm the reality of the work collaboration between husband and wife. Many examples could be cited, even at a higher level, of artisans who owned their shop and were in a position to commercialize their products. The silk-worker Zuanne Raimondi dalla Seda, in his 1556 will, entrusted his children, shop, and workers to his wife, declaring that nobody could ever make claims against her for the right to control the shop's accounts, "because she has a great intelligence." The wife, Angela, could make decisions regarding the education and training of their sons, one of whom would eventually

⁵⁴ Romano, *Housecraft*, p. 159; Bellavitis, *Famille*.

succeed her in the shop, while another was to be sent to Germany to learn the trade with "our esteemed merchants." Zuanne Raimondi also recommended that their daughters be given in marriage to Venetian patricians, a significant example of the conceivable possibilities for social advancement in the age.⁵⁵

Guild regulations from the 15th century onward allowed silk-weavers to employ their wives and daughters, but progressively, especially in the silk sector, the Venetian government chose to facilitate autonomous female work in order to stimulate production, thanks to the cheaper labor offered by female workers. From 1754 onward, women could become master silk-weavers, but they could only produce on commission by merchants. Moreover, if they did not wish to give up their trade and shop, they could only marry a master weaver. Little girls were in shops beginning at seven years of age, and by ten to 12 years of age, they often knew how to operate a loom; at 17, they were expert weavers; but those who reached this result were, for the most part, daughters of master weavers or widows. Women were present especially in less skilled and less remunerated positions within the silk industry, however, jobs often carried out in houses inhabited by several families or by several widows who shared the cost of rent, sometimes sub-letting rooms to other people. These small female domestic enterprises constituted specific forms of cohabitation by women who belonged to different family groups and different generations.⁵⁶

Artisan fathers were in the habit of committing their daughters to marriage, hardly ever to monachization, and left mothers free to decide the value of daughters' dowries. However, because daughters, like wives, collaborated in the activity of the artisan's shop, the father's obligation to provide his daughter with a dowry took on a completely different meaning. Artisans' wills, when there were no sons, served to protect widows in their old age and also to encourage widows to remarry. Many wives

⁵⁵ Dennis Romano, *Patricians and Popolani. The Social Foundations of the Venetian Renaissance State* (Baltimore, 1987); Crouzet-Pavan, *Sopra le acque*; Bellavitis, *Famille*, pp. 159–160.

⁵⁶ Luca Molà, *La comunità dei Lucchesi a Venezia. Immigrazione e industria della seta nel tardo Medioevo* (Venice, 1994); Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore/London, 2000); Luca Molà, "Le donne nell'industria serica veneziana del Rinascimento," in Luca Molà, Reinhold C. Mueller, and Claudio Zannier, eds., *La seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento* (Venice, 2000), pp. 423–59; Panciera, "Emarginazione"; Marcello Della Valentina, "The Silk Industry in Venice: Guilds and Labour Relations in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Paola Lanaro, ed., *At the Center of the Old World. Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland, 1400–1800* (Toronto, 2006), pp. 109–42.

of artisans left their dowries to their husbands, which they had certainly earned with their own work—and, perhaps, supplemented with the help of some charitable organization—rather than inherited from their fathers. If dowries had been invested in the shop, in which husband and wife collaborated, it was difficult to ask the widower to relinquish a part of it to repay the wife's dowry. It is hard to say whether the case of a wife's will leaving the husband heir, to the detriment of her family of origin, is to be considered the result of coercion or pressure on the husband's part. Some women, nevertheless, expressed this worry in their will, which they dictated to the notary in a moment when their husbands were absent or while they visited relatives. This occurred in the case of the widow of a furrier, remarried in Padua, and who, taking advantage of a visit to a brother who was still in Venice, dictated her will to the notary, leaving 300 ducats to her son from her first marriage. At the end of the will, she had the notary write: "And in case I am forced by my husband, or by someone else, to rewrite my will, it shall only be valid if I write Jesus Maria, Jesus Maria, Jesus Maria three times."⁵⁷

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⁵⁷ Bellavitis, *Famille*, p. 134.

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SOCIETY AND THE SEXES IN THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

Anne Jacobson Schutte

Introduction

It seems to me that we should be interested in the history of both women and men, that we should not be working only on the subjected sex any more than an historian of class can focus only on peasants. Our goal is to understand the significance of the sexes, of gender groups in the historical past.¹

In the 35 years since Natalie Zemon Davis made this wise recommendation, few Anglophone and even fewer European historians have followed it. Even when the word *gender* appears in the title of a book, article, conference, or course syllabus, the content usually conforms to an older paradigm, history of women. Operating as a historian of gender, I shall focus here on two particularly suggestive aspects of society and the sexes in early modern Venice (with some attention to cities, towns, and regions beyond the dominant city): space and life status ("regular" or "irregular" marriage, concubinage, widowhood, lay singlehood, and religious profession).

An Appetizer: Coryats Crudities

Let us begin by sampling a platter of *cicheti* prepared in the early 17th century by an English chef. To highlight the distinctive features of Venetian society, many scholars have drawn on published writings by foreign tourists. Thomas Coryate (c.1577–1617), son of a minister in Somerset, invariably figures among them.² After spending three years at Oxford without taking a degree and serving for some time as unofficial court jester in the household of Prince Henry, he set off in the spring of 1608 on a five-month tour of the Continent. An account of his travels appeared in print three

¹ Natalie Zemon Davis, "‘Women’s History’ in Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies* 3 (1976), 90.

² Robert C. Davis, "The Geography of Gender in the Renaissance," in Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis, eds., *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1998), pp. 20, 22, 33–35, 37; Patricia Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice: Art, Architecture and the Family* (New Haven and London, 2004), pp. 1, 5, 118, 144, 153, 155–56, 159–61, 217–18, 245–47.

years later as *Coryats Crudities* (London, 1611). At the midpoint of his journey, he spent about six weeks, from late June to early August, in Venice. His conclusion to the section on his stay there reveals that he fully subscribed to “the myth of Venice.” Notwithstanding his strong allegiance to Protestantism, he lauded the *Serenissima* as “this incomparable city, this most beautifull Queene, this untainted virgine, this Paradise, this Tempe, this rich Diademe and most flourishing garland of Christendome.”³

Like all transalpine visitors, Coryate paid particular attention to matters Venetian that struck him as exotic. These included observations often quoted by modern scholars. Patrician women—veils on their faces, dressed in elaborate gowns revealing large portions of breasts and backs—totted between their homes and churches on “chapineys” (*pianelli*), wedged wooden sandals so high that the wearers had to be supported by attendants on either side.⁴ On Saturday afternoons, they put chemicals on their hair and sat in the sun to bleach it.⁵ When he attended a service in the Levantine synagogue, he was surprised to discover that most of its prosperous male members did not conform to the English stereotype of the ugly, sour-faced Jew. Many of the women, who sat separately in the upper gallery, were extraordinarily beautiful and sumptuously attired.⁶ Venice’s famous, accomplished, and wealthy courtesans⁷—one of whom he called on solely, he was careful to note, in order to gather information—played a highly visible role in the city.⁸

Historians less often comment on the attention Coryate paid to other Venetian men and women. He observed with admiration the doge, senators, and other patricians in their traditional black robes, and with amazement the fact that elite male Venetians lived very frugally and did their own grocery shopping.⁹ In passing, he mentioned that in Campo Santo Stefano on Sundays and holidays, boys played a ball game called “baloon” (*balon*) before crowds of male spectators, who rented stools if they wished to observe the contests in comfort.¹⁰ When men fought in the streets,

³ Thomas Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 2 vols (Glasgow, 1905), 1:427.

⁴ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:400; Virginia Cox, “The Single Self: Feminist Thought and the Marriage Market in Early Modern Venice,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 48/3 (Autumn, 1995), 554.

⁵ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:400–01.

⁶ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:370–73.

⁷ Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 159–87.

⁸ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:386–87, 401–09.

⁹ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:388, 396–98, 415.

¹⁰ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:385.

bystanders made no effort to stop them.¹¹ For the first time in his life, he saw women perform on stage.¹² In somewhat more detail, he discussed the mountebanks, mostly men but a few women, who hawked their wares and entertained the public in Piazza San Marco.¹³ Like other foreign tourists, Coryate had nothing to say about Venetians who were not strikingly different in dress and/or behavior from people at home.

Public and Private Spaces: Elites

For a fuller understanding of gender in Venice and its subject cities, we must go beyond Coryate to other sources and scholarly interpretations of them. Projected back into the early modern period, the 19th-century notion of the “public sphere” as the domain of men and the “private” one as the natural and proper environment of women is wildly anachronistic. As I intend to show in this and the next section, issues of gender and space were more complex than often assumed.

A series of woodcuts by Matteo Pagan (Fig. 8.1), *Procession of the Doge in Piazza San Marco on Palm Sunday* (1556–59, Museo Civico Correr), provides a vivid example from which to start. Both men and women are present in Pagan’s depiction, but they inhabit different zones of this space. Arranged by rank, secular and religious notables, all men, wind their way around the piazza. From second-story windows, women (presumably elite but perhaps also courtesans) observe the procession. That women, not nearly as visible to the viewer, also gaze down from the windows in a painting produced two generations earlier (Fig. 8.2), Gentile Bellini’s *Procession of the True Cross in Piazza San Marco* (1496, Gallerie dell’Accademia), indicates that such a separation of men and women was a constant feature of Venetian processional life.

Many foreign visitors, though not Coryate, remarked on the extraordinarily rigid seclusion of well-born Venetian women in their homes.¹⁴ Twenty years ago, Dennis Romano contended “that the division of the city into male and female space was one of the marked and powerful dichotomies in the Venetian urban landscape.”¹⁵ Piazza San Marco, at the political and ritual core of the city, and Rialto, its financial and commercial center,

¹¹ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:413–14.

¹² Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:386.

¹³ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:409–10.

¹⁴ Davis, “The Geography of Gender,” pp. 21–23.

¹⁵ Dennis Romano, “Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice,” *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989), 339–40; second quotation in this same paragraph, p. 347.



Figure 8.1. Elite woman in pianelle supported by servant. Giovanni Grevembroch, *Gli abiti de' veneziani di quasi ogni età* (watercolor, eighteenth century). Biblioteca del Museo Correr, MS Gradenigo-Dolfín 49 (= 191). Courtesy of Museo Civico Correr.

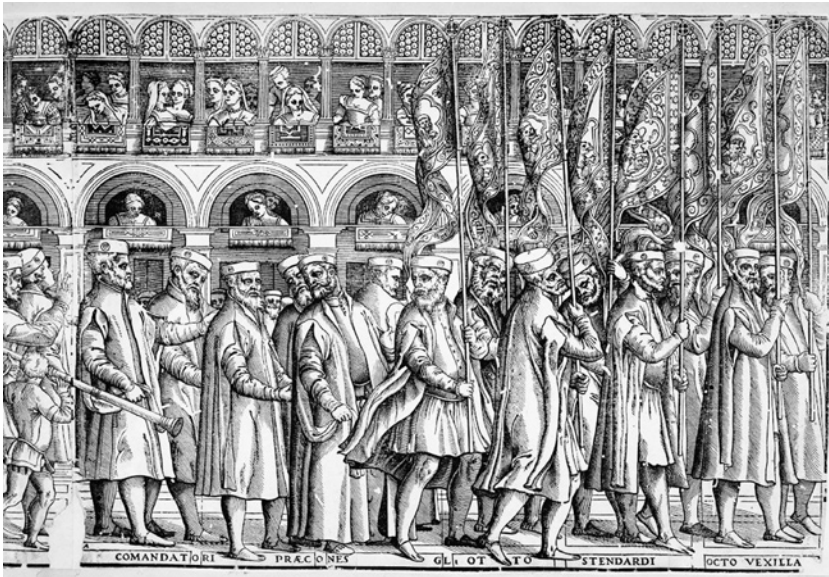


Figure 8.2. Men processing, women watching. Matteo Pagan, *Procession of the Doge in Piazza San Marco on Palm Sunday* (engraving, 1556–59), detail. Courtesy of Museo Civico Correr.

were exclusively male spaces. Fearing threats to women's chastity, political authorities and patriarchs made sure that "virtually all female sites in Venice's gender-specific geography were enclosed and bounded": women were restricted to their homes and one or two adjacent contrade (more or less conterminous with parishes).

Only to a limited extent is this blanket assertion accurate.¹⁶ As regards elite women, it may be partially valid for the 15th and 16th centuries, though not for the doges' wives. On occasion, *dogaresse* appeared in public, usually in gondolas, when they escorted important female visitors around the city.¹⁷ In the 16th century, two of them were accorded coronation ceremonies: Zilia Dandolo Priuli in 1557 and Morosina Morosini Grimani in 1597.¹⁸ Romano's

¹⁶ Edward Muir, "In Some Neighbors We Trust: On the Exclusion of Women from the Public in Renaissance Italy," in David S. Peterson and Daniel E. Bornstein, eds., *Florence and Beyond: Culture, Society and Politics in Renaissance Italy: Essays in Honour of John M. Najemy* (Toronto, 2008), pp. 271–89.

¹⁷ Holly S. Hurlburt, *The Dogaresse of Venice, 1200–1500* (New York, 2006).

¹⁸ Bronwen Wilson, "Il bel sesso, e l'austero Senato': The Coronation of Dogaresse Morosini Grimani," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 (1999), 73–139; Hurlburt, *The Dogaresse of Venice*.

generalization also fails to account for lengthy periods in the spring and fall when some patrician women, leaving their husbands and often their children in the city, moved to the families' country villas. Fiorenza Capello Grimani, for example, was not seeking and probably did not enjoy rest and recreation while at her natal family's villa in Mèolo, southwest of San Donà di Piave. Instead, she saw to the *lissia*—washing of draperies and bed coverings, transported for that purpose to the country once or twice a year—and attended to the Capello soap-making monopoly. Beyond overseeing planting and harvesting and arranging for the transport of food and wine to Venice, she also supervised construction projects.¹⁹

From the late 17th century on, elite women increasingly joined men in frequenting semi-public and public spaces: *salotti* (regular gatherings in the homes of *patrizie*, especially wives of the procurators of San Marco), *casini* (quarters rented for conversational gatherings), *ridotti* (gambling establishments), and coffeehouses.²⁰ They had additional opportunities for cultural enrichment, available from the mid-17th century on: plays, operas,²¹ and performances of sacred music by highly trained young female musicians in the four Ospedali Grandi.²² (Unfortunately for the connoisseur of music Coryate, who waxed ecstatic over the instrumentalists and an extraordinary tenor he heard at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco on that saint's feast day,²³ the two musical venues just mentioned had yet to appear on the Venetian cultural scene.) Abundant visual evidence from the 18th century attests to the presence of elite women, disguised in masks, among the socially and sexually heterogeneous crowds in Piazza San Marco during Carnival season.

¹⁹ Giovanna Paolin, *Lettere familiari della nobildonna veneziana Fiorenza Capello Grimani (1592–1605)* (Trieste, 1996).

²⁰ Elena Brambilla, "Donne, salotti e Lumi: dalla Francia all'Italia," in Andreina De Clementi, ed., *Il genere dell'Europa. Le radici comuni della cultura europea e l'identità del genere* (Rome, 2003), pp. 57–95; Brambilla, "Dalle 'conversazioni' ai salotti letterari (1680–1720)," in Maria Luisa Betri and Elena Brambilla, eds., *Salotti e ruolo femminile in Italia* (Venice, 2004), pp. 545–52; Tiziana Plebani, "Socialità, conversazioni e casini nella Venezia del secondo Settecento," in Betri and Brambilla, eds., *Salotti e ruolo femminile*, pp. 153–76; Jonathan Walker, "Gambling and Venetian Noblemen, c.1500–1700," *Past and Present* 162 (1999), 28–69.

²¹ Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley, 1991); Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), pp. 109–48.

²² Pier Giuseppe Gillio, *L'attività musicale negli ospedali di Venezia nel Settecento* (Florence, 2006); Laura Moretti, *Dagli Incurabili alla Pietà: Le chiese degli ospedali grandi di Venezia tra architettura e musica, 1522–1790* (Florence, 2008).

²³ Coryate, *Coryats Crudities*, 1:388–91.

Whether or not their husbands were in Venice, elite women were accompanied to these sites of mixed-gender sociability by *cisisbei*: married or unmarried men of their own class, who usually attended them in their homes as well, often over a period of many years. Consider, for example, Caterina (Cattina) Contarini, married in 1755 at around 22 to an age-mate, Giovanni (Zanetto) Querini Stampalia. Taking with him the eldest of their four young sons, Zanetto departed in 1768 for Spain, where he spent almost five years as Venetian ambassador. During his absence, as Cattina reported regularly to her husband by letter, Senator Girolamo Giustinian (a distant bachelor relative of Zanetto some 20 years the couple's senior, who had become her *cicisbeo* six years earlier) served as her escort. He also lent a helpful hand in paying off Zanetto's enormous gambling debts. Although Cattina's father was not happy about her relationship with Giustinian, her husband expressed no objection.²⁴ Contrary to allegations by foreign visitors and moralists of all nationalities, *cicisbeismo* (a pervasive practice in most Italian cities but less common in provincial environments) seems seldom to have involved adultery.²⁵

Taking for granted that patrician palaces and other homes inhabited by the wealthy were private female spaces is an error. The ground floors of elite residences, where men conducted business and stored merchandise, surely qualify as male preserves. Nor can areas on the upper stories be accurately gendered exclusively female. In parts of palaces inhabited by one or more related patrician families, male heads of household exercised their recognized right and responsibility to govern their wives, children, and servants, often with an iron fist. Except for the *portego* (the great hall on the *piano nobile*), the *paterfamilias*'s study, and the rooms of unmarried daughters (who once they reached the "dangerous age" of puberty were confined to inner parts of the building out of males' sight), upstairs spaces in these residences were not strictly segregated by gender.²⁶

Churches, too, were dual-gender spaces. Somewhat like ducal processions, they featured males (officiating priests) in prominent positions, but congregations included members of both sexes, seated on opposite sides of the central aisle. So were some female monastic houses. In 1563 the Council of Trent reiterated the prescription of strict active and passive enclosure for religious women: nuns were not to venture outside their

²⁴ Roberto Bizzocchi, *Cicisbei. Morale privata e identità nazionale in Italia* (Rome, 2008), pp. 135–47.

²⁵ Bizzocchi, *Cicisbei*, pp. 241–92.

²⁶ Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 64–82, 91.

convents; without permission from the ordinary, lay women and men could not enter the outer precincts, let alone the cloister proper. According to directives issued by bishops aimed at enforcing the Tridentine decrees, doors to the outside were to be kept locked except when the convent's superior ordered them opened. Windows permitting nuns to look out and others to look in were to be barred or bricked up. In other words, convents were intended to be exclusively female spaces.

After Trent, some cloisters—particularly venerable, prestigious Benedictine and Augustinian houses—remained relatively permeable. *Parlatori* (visiting rooms), fitted with close-meshed grills and curtains rendering visual and tactile contact between nuns and their visitors impossible, were supposed to be monitored by *ascoltatrici*, senior nuns charged with making sure that no untoward talk or behavior occurred. In Venice and elsewhere in Catholic Europe, however, these regulations were not always rigorously enforced.²⁷ Ordinaries like Giovanni Tiepolo, Patriarch of Venice in the early 17th century, recognized that well-born religious women, many of whom had entered convents not by choice but through force and fear exerted by their elders, must not be driven to desperation by excessively rigorous regulation of their lives.²⁸ A well-known painting by Francesco Guardi, *The Parlatory of the Nuns of San Zaccaria* (1746, Museo del Settecento Veneziano Ca' Rezzonico), depicts unveiled nuns fully visible to their adult visitors of both sexes, along with a puppet theater for the children. Clearly, the visiting room in this Benedictine convent was a site of virtually unregulated mixed-gender sociability.

Not all convents in Venice and its subject territories resembled San Zaccaria. Largely because they were much less permeable, the houses of female congregations famed for austerity—above all, the Capuchins and the Discalced Carmelites, both established in the 16th century—attracted only women with genuine religious vocations. Take, for example, Santa Maria della Neve, a Capuchin establishment in Brescia, where the noblewoman Maria Maddalena Martinengo (1687–1737; beatified in 1900) elected to spend her adult life. The convent's constitutions restricted relatives to one annual visit—more than enough for Martinengo, who would have

²⁷ Anne Jacobson Schutte, "The Permeable Cloister?" in Elissa B. Weaver, ed., *Arcangela Tarabotti: A Literary Nun in Baroque Venice* (Ravenna, 2006), pp. 19–36.

²⁸ Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Between Venice and Rome: The Dilemma of Involuntary Nuns," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 41 (2010), 422.

preferred never to see or hear from her kin.²⁹ Except in emergencies, nuns in this convent were allowed to write only three letters per year, provided that the abbess consented and supplied pen and paper.³⁰ Aside from the priests who heard their confessions and administered communion, Martinengo and her convent sisters had no regular contact with members of the opposite sex. Santa Maria della Neve was a truly private, exclusively female space.

Elite Venetian men spent many of their daylight hours in the two main male spaces mentioned earlier. Affluent patricians attended meetings of the Senate, Great Council, and elective magistracies in or near Palazzo Ducale; poor ones hung about there hoping to obtain minor appointments. In the same area, *cittadini originari* (a legal category of prosperous people ranked just below patricians) worked in the headquarters of magistracies where they held jobs. Both men belonging to these two categories and other merchants did business at and around Rialto. *Cittadini originari* administered the six Scuole Grandi, major confraternities from which patricians were excluded. Some elite men became procurators of female religious houses, which they often visited in order to confer with female superiors. The same was presumably the case for socially prominent men in the governmental and business centers and convents of subject cities. As patricians withdrew from overseas trade and invested in rural property, they probably spent much of the late summer and early fall in the country—a *villeggiatura* that, like that of their wives, was not devoted entirely to leisurely pursuits.

By no means did all elite males in the Venetian Republic lead the sedate lives just described. Other activities in public space monopolized their time and energy. Sixty years ago, Andrea Da Mosto equated two Venetian patricians inclined to violence with *bravi*: men of lower social status who specialized in fighting and killing, either on permanent retainer or available for hire to perform particular assignments.³¹ More recently, Jonathan Walker has put forward a different and more persuasive explanation of the relationship between criminally inclined nobles and *bravi*. Nobles unsuccessful or uninterested in climbing the Venetian political *cursus honorum* employed *bravi* both in the city and on the mainland, often near their

²⁹ Maria Maddalena Martinengo, *Gli scritti*, ed. Franco Fusar Bassini, O.F.M. Cap. (Rome, 2006), pp. 382, 781.

³⁰ Martinengo, *Gli scritti*, p. 1970.

³¹ Andrea Da Mosto, *I bravi di Venezia* (Milan, 1950), pp. 62–84.

villas, in order to pursue other ends: intimidation, extortion, hetero- and homosexual rape, and murder. At the end of the 16th century, as part of the punishment for their crimes, the Council of X deprived at least two of them, Zuanne Memmo and Lunardo Pesaro, of their noble status.³²

In primarily rural Friuli, the northeastern zone of the Republic, members of noble clans gained a well-earned reputation for violence, as several examples will illustrate. Partially in reaction to the disastrous War of the League of Cambrai, as Edward Muir has shown, they formed factions dubbed the *Strumieri* and *Zamberlani*. Aided by their partisans and retainers, they did bloody battle, beginning on Fat Tuesday 1511 in Udine and subsequently spreading all over the region.³³ Federica Ambrosini presents another case study. Thirteen-year-old Isabella da Passano, a girl of Genoese ancestry born and highly educated in Padua, was married off by her mother in 1555 to Marco della Frattina, member of a noble clan in western Friuli. On moving to his never-finished residence in Portogruaro, she discovered that like most of his male kin, her husband was an improvident thug; their sons would follow in his footsteps. Her female peers, disdaining Isabella as a foreigner, never welcomed her into their circle. Over the years, Marco went deeper and deeper into debt. In 1585, after he and their son Antonio were banished from Venetian territory for insulting a Venetian official, they went off to Hungary as mercenaries, where they presumably died—when and whether on the battlefield are both uncertain. At no point in their long, unsatisfactory marriage did Isabella seriously consider returning to her mother, who had moved to Mantua, or joining her brothers in Genoa. Until her death in 1601, she remained in Friuli, caring for an illegitimate orphaned grandson. One of the few ties between Isabella and Marco may have been their mutual attraction to philo-Protestantism.³⁴ This is by no means the only instance of links between violence and heresy among Friulan nobles.³⁵

Until historians uncover someone worse, young Paolo Orgiano, brought to light by Claudio Povolo, will head the list of elite criminals on the

³² Jonathan Walker, "Bravi and Venetian Nobles, c.1550–1650," *Studi veneziani* 26 (1998), 85–113, quoted phrase at p. 113.

³³ Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1993).

³⁴ Federica Ambrosini, *L'eresia di Isabella. Vita di Isabella da Passano, signora della Frattina (1542–1601)* (Milan, 2005).

³⁵ Nicholas S. Davidson, "An Armed Band and the Local Community in the Venetian Terraferma in the Sixteenth Century," in Gherardo Ortalli, ed., *Bandi armati, banditi, banditismo e repressione di giustizia negli stati europei di antico regime* (Rome, 1986), pp. 401–22.

Venetian *terraferma*. Born in 1580, this local notable in the hinterland southwest of Vicenza may have been Alessandro Manzoni's model for Don Rodrigo, the chief villain in *I promessi sposi*.³⁶ Put on trial in 1605–07 for a long, horrific series of rapes and other acts of violence against his social inferiors; he was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.³⁷

Public and Private Spaces: Non-Elites

Romano briefly conceded that non-elite women regularly frequented the allegedly male space in the environs of Rialto, either assisting in their husbands' shops or, as widows, running them.³⁸ That is hardly the whole story. As Monica Chojnacka has demonstrated, if not fully occupied at home caring for children, women regularly moved on foot beyond their residences and immediate neighborhoods on their way to and from their places of employment, notaries' offices, secular and ecclesiastical tribunals, health-care providers' and fortune-tellers' places of business, and charitable institutions. Often they had to make long detours in order to cross the Rialto bridge, then the only way of traversing the Grand Canal on foot. Other reasons for women's venturing away from home included their main recreational outlet—visiting relatives and friends, not only in other parts of the city but also in mainland villages and towns and even further afield—and judicial exile from Venice. Like non-elite men, they frequently moved house.³⁹

Several recent studies illuminate the variety of occupations pursued by working women. Fiscal records (*estimi*) and confraternity registers from 15th-century Treviso mention live-in and live-out domestic servants, sellers of foodstuffs and other retail products, dressmakers, workers in male relatives' crafts and other enterprises, and the occasional carrier of water. Full-time or in combination with other activities, they spun and wove wool. Their jobs were seldom permanent, but neither were many working men's.⁴⁰ In late 16th-century Venice, the registers of the Giustizia Vecchia record 246 apprenticeship contracts for women in their mid-teens

³⁶ Claudio Povo, *Il romanziere e l'archivista. Da un processo veneziano del '600 all'anonimo manoscritto dei Promessi sposi* (Venice, 1993).

³⁷ Claudio Povo, *L'intrigo dell'onore: Poteri e istituzioni nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Verona, 1997).

³⁸ Romano, "Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice," p. 340.

³⁹ Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001), pp. 103–20.

⁴⁰ Matthieu Scherman, "I lavori delle donne nella Treviso del Quattrocento," *Genesis* 8 (2009), 233–46.

entering domestic service and branches of the textile trades, and many more for young men in a wider variety of occupations.⁴¹ In Venice and several of its subject cities, women—commoners, Jews, nuns in both socially exclusive and low-status convents, and even a few patricians—worked in the silk industry. Alone or in groups, they separated the strands of cocoons, wound them onto bobbins, and wove inexpensive items. Female mediators delivered the raw material to households and convents, consigned completed work to silk-weaving shops (often purloining and selling part of the product on their own account), and collected and distributed to workers their meager pay.⁴² Tax records and censuses of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, furthermore, attest to non-elite women (single, married, and widowed) owning property.⁴³

Certain recreational activities of non-elite males form a violent, agonistic, masculinity-reinforcing counterpart to the dignified, orderly elite processions discussed earlier, as Robert Davis has shown. *Battiglioli sui ponti* (fist-fights on bridges) in the fall pitted the *Castellani* (workers in the Arsenal, located in the eastern part of the city) against the *Nicolotti* (fishermen from the western sestiere of Dorsoduro). *Cacce dei tori*—combats between oxen and large dogs, after which the bovines were paraded around by their handlers or allowed to run through the streets—were also held in the fall until governmental authorities shifted them to Carnival season. At least implicitly, most of them aimed at enhancing the prestige of one parish at the expense of neighboring ones. From a safe distance, elite males watched the “wars of the fists”; one of them sponsored each of the taurine contests.⁴⁴ Any woman interested in viewing these bloody encounters would have been well advised to position herself out of harm’s way in a window above the ground floor.

⁴¹ Dennis Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft: Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice, 1400–1600* (Baltimore, 1996); Anna Bellavitis, “Apprentissages masculins, apprentissages féminins a Venise au XVI siècle,” *Histoire urbaine* 15 (2006), 49–73; Bellavitis, “Le travail des femmes dans les contrats d’apprentissages de la Giustizia vecchia (Venise, XVI^e siècle),” in Isabelle Chabot, Jérôme Hayez, and Didier Lett, eds., *La famille, les femmes et le quotidien (XIV^e–XVIII^e siècle)* (Paris, 2006), pp. 181–95.

⁴² Luca Molà, “Le donne nell’industria serica Venezia del Rinascimento,” in Luca Molà, Reinhold C. Mueller, and Claudio Zanier, eds., *La seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento: Dal baco al drappo* (Venice, 2000), pp. 423–59.

⁴³ Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*, pp. 26–49.

⁴⁴ Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists: Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice* (New York, 1994); Robert C. Davis, “The Trouble with Bulls: The *Cacce dei Tori* in Early-Modern Venice,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 29 (1996), 275–90.

Numerous non-elites in Venice were immigrants. Especially in times of plague, famine, and war, men and women came to the city from nearby mainland towns and villages, Venetian-ruled regions further away (Friuli, Dalmatia, the Greek islands), Lombardy, across the Alps, and territories in southeastern Europe under Ottoman control. In their new place of residence, men with previous occupational experience or at least strong backs had a reasonably good chance of finding employment. Women, often single or widowed, had a harder time of it. Those able to enter live-in domestic service were the more fortunate—though they ran the risk of seduction or rape by their employers, a not infrequent occurrence.⁴⁵ Many others, as Inquisition records in particular show, kept body and soul together by working as sorceresses, healers, and/or prostitutes.⁴⁶

Male and female immigrants lived all over the city, always (like non-elite natives) in rented lodgings.⁴⁷ In contrast, speakers of Greek and Slavic languages, mostly of the Eastern Orthodox faith, tended to concentrate in parishes immediately to the east of Piazza San Marco in the *sestiere* of Castello. Apparently less able or willing than immigrants from other regions to learn Italian and integrate into Venetian society, they stuck to themselves. Native inhabitants, perceiving and fearing them as “others,” did not hesitate to denounce foreign women to the Holy Office as practitioners and teachers of superstitious healing and sorcery. A case in point is Marietta Grimani, also known as Marietta greca, tried in 1666. Stressing that as she was not a Greek but a native Venetian of Cypriot ancestry, she first claimed that she was not a sorceress but a beautician, then that she practiced innocuous herbal healing, and finally that she was a victim of mistaken identity. None of these tactics worked; judged “gravely suspect as a teacher of heretical spells,” she was sentenced to a year of house arrest.⁴⁸ Foreign men, especially northerners, were often accused of disparaging Catholic doctrine and practice, avoiding Mass and confession, and eating meat at prohibited times.

Whether populated by natives or immigrants, the small, crowded, usually one-room dwellings of Venetian workers⁴⁹ can hardly be considered private spaces. Through cracks in doors and thin walls, on common

⁴⁵ Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore, 2001), pp. 101–03.

⁴⁶ Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*, pp. 81–97.

⁴⁷ Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice*, pp. 97–100.

⁴⁸ Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, pp. 100–01.

⁴⁹ Isabella Palumbo-Fossati, “L'interno della casa dell'artigiano e dell'artista nella Venezia del Cinquecento,” *Studi veneziani* 8 (1984), 109.

staircases, at wells in courtyards and *campi*, and through windows looking down into streets and squares and across to other apartments, neighbors could easily see and hear what was going on in other people's lives. Eager to share their observations with friends and neighbors, they contributed to an ample stock of common knowledge (*pubblica voce e fama*) about people and events. When called to testify in court, they rarely hesitated to reveal everything they knew and surmised about the principals in judicial proceedings—not only their peers but also their betters.⁵⁰

Life Status: "Regular" and "Irregular" Marriage

Among Venetian patricians, marriage in the 16th through 18th centuries was far from universal. Legislation enacted in the 15th and early 16th centuries, as Stanley Chojnacki has shown, mandated the careful scrutiny and registration of credentials for young men's admission to official noble status: legitimate birth to patrician fathers and patrician or at least well-born mothers.⁵¹ Moves in the mid-16th century toward restricting to one or at most two the number of sons in a patrician family permitted to take wives—a development that occurred all over Italy—increased the proportion of patrician men, already in the 15th century some 43 per cent, who never married.⁵² One of the reasons for this limitation may have been strictly political: should unchecked marriage and a plethora of progeny lead to the expansion of the ruling group, as the Milanese writer Ludovico Settala warned in his *Della ragion di stato* (1627), an aristocratic republic might degenerate into a popular regime.⁵³ Preserving the patrimony so that the bulk of it would pass to a sole heir, however, constituted an even more compelling reason for limiting marriages of both male and female patricians. The difficulty or impossibility of paying ever-inflating dowries—the most often cited reason for Italian elites' arranging marriages for few or none of their daughters and placing most or all of them in convents—formed merely a subset of this compelling patrimonial logic. Although Venetian patrician men could marry wealthy women outside their own social set, the options for their female peers seem to have been

⁵⁰ Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, pp. 138, 183–84.

⁵¹ Stanley Chojnacki, "Subaltern Patriarchs: Patrician Bachelors," in his *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 246–48; Alexander Cowan, *Marriage, Manners and Mobility in Early Modern Venice* (Aldershot, 2007).

⁵² Chojnacki, "Subaltern Patriarchs," p. 249.

⁵³ Cox, "The Single Self," p. 531.

much more restricted: if not marriage to a noble (Venetian or from the mainland), then willy nilly to Christ in a convent, the undesirable status of maiden aunt, or adherence to a “semireligious” institute.⁵⁴

Neither in the Venetian Republic nor anywhere else did mutual attraction between prospective spouses have much to do with marriage, at least in the upper and middle social ranks. Fathers, other male relatives, and occasionally mothers made matches for financial and political reasons. Over time, affection between husband and wife might develop. The evidence thus far adduced to show that in 15th- and early 16th-century Venice it did—references in wills to the “excellent companionship” (*bonissima chompagnia*) a spouse had provided, use of such superlative adjectives as “dearest” (*charissima/o*, *dilectissima/o*) to describe her or him, assignment of a large portion of the estate and the role of sole or primary executor to a surviving wife or husband⁵⁵—should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt. To some extent, they may represent conventions observed by notaries redacting wills and testators writing their own. Correspondence, for obvious reasons thinner on the ground than wills, is a more reliable source, as two examples will show.

At the turn of the 16th century, Fiorenza Capello's letters to her husband, Antonio Grimani, trace the trajectory of a troubled relationship. A few months after their marriage in February 1592, Fiorenza addressed him as “my sweetest lord” (*dolcissimo mio signore*) and closed by terming herself his “most affectionate spouse” (*affetionatissima consorte*). Six months later, she mentioned sarcastically a report that in her absence from Venice, he was consorting with “la Valacha,” a courtesan or prostitute. Steadily cooling relations between the spouses may help to explain why Fiorenza spent so much time in the country. Early in 1605, she belatedly learned that for the past five years, Antonio had been secretly maneuvering to make their second daughter, Chiara, a nun in a Paduan convent—a placement her mother adamantly opposed because, she said, the nine-year-old girl had no inclination for life in religion. What Fiorenza understandably viewed as a betrayal further eroded the marriage. Pregnant for at least the

⁵⁴ Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 18–71; but cfr. Volker Huencke, “Kindbett oder Kloster. Lebenswege venezianischer Patrizierinnen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 18 (1992), 446–76; and Huencke, *Il patriziato veneziano alla fine della Repubblica, 1646–1797: Demografia, famiglia, ménage* (Rome, 1997), 154–228.

⁵⁵ Stanley Chojnacki, “The Power of Love: Wives and Husbands,” in his *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 153–68; quotations at pp. 165–66, 162.

ninth time, she returned to the home of her natal family, where she died in childbirth.⁵⁶

The corpus of 460 letters exchanged between 1768 and 1773 by Cattina Contarini Querini and her absent husband, Zanetto, reveals a much more amicable union. Although Cattina twitted Zanetto at one point about gossip circulating in Venice that he was amusing himself in Madrid “with a certain diplomatic representative’s wife” (*consolessa*) and repeatedly complained that his debts were causing her great embarrassment, they frequently expressed their love for each other and longing for the day when they could be together again.⁵⁷ It is worth noting that although these spouses employed the standard second person plural, *voi*, they called each other by their first nicknames⁵⁸—unlike Fiorenza and Antonio, who used the more formal terms *consorte* and *signora/e*.⁵⁹

Much evidence about both “regular” and “irregular” marriage in all social strata comes from *cause matrimoniali*: records of litigation in ecclesiastical courts aimed at enforcing unfulfilled promises of marriage, challenging the validity of unions, and obtaining separation from unsatisfactory spouses. Over the past 15 years, this body of sources has attracted the attention of numerous scholars, whose work may be found in a four-volume set of essays⁶⁰ and many other publications. Studies of *cause matrimoniali* from Venice and the Veneto, only a small sampling of which can be provided here, show that except at the very bottom of the social scale, family members usually played a decisive part in selecting their daughters’ spouses. Some docile young women followed their fathers’ wishes. In 1507, for instance, the *popolana* Giovanna de Liberalis, while readily admitting her attraction to Martino Cursio, reported having told her suitor that since she had resolved to marry the man her father chose, he should formally request her hand.⁶¹ Not infrequently, however, this practice clashed with

⁵⁶ Paolin, *Lettere familiari*, pp. 35–36, 56, 18.

⁵⁷ Bizzocchi, *Cicisbei*, pp. 135–47; quoted phrase at p. 137.

⁵⁸ Bizzocchi, *Cicisbei*, p. 135; Marzio Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto. Mutamenti della famiglia in Italia dal XV al XX secolo* (Bologna, 1984), pp. 265–342.

⁵⁹ Paolin, *Lettere familiari*.

⁶⁰ See Silvana Seidel Menchi and Diego Quaglioni, eds: *Coniugi nemici: La separazione in Italia dal XII al XVIII secolo* (Bologna, 2000); *Matrimoni in dubbio: Unioni controverse e nozze clandestine in Italia dal XIV al XVIII secolo* (Bologna, 2001); *Trasgressioni: Seduzione, concubinato, adulterio, bigamia (XIV–XVIII secolo)* (Bologna, 2004); and *I tribunali del matrimonio (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Bologna, 2006).

⁶¹ Cecilia Cristellon, “‘Io voleva tuor quello che mio padre me daria.’ Autorità parentale e scelte matrimoniali dei figli: Venezia XV e XVI secolo,” in Ida Fazio and Daniela Lombardi, eds., *Generazioni: legami di parentela tra passato e presente* (Rome, 2006), pp. 205–21.

the Church's insistence that marriage, a contractual arrangement, necessitated the free consent of both parties entering into it.⁶² Young women violently opposed to their fathers' choices often went to court in an effort to obtain dissolution of marital unions into which they claimed to have been forced. In 1628 Vittoria Cesana, whose father threatened to murder her if she did not wed the patrician Giovanni Battista Barbaro, a man she definitely did not want, had no alternative to doing so. Appalled by her laments, Barbaro left her only three days after the wedding, whereupon she sued for annulment of the marriage.⁶³ Men, too, occasionally went before the court claiming marriage by force (*matrimonium meticulosum*). In the early 1460s, Alvisi Soncin, a student at the University of Padua, attempted—successfully, so incomplete records suggest—to persuade two ecclesiastical courts that fear of Ursina Basso's relatives had compelled him to wed her.⁶⁴

Some very young girls were forced to become child brides. The complex case of the orphan Maddalena di Sicilia (legitimated daughter of the late Cosma, a native of Catania who had moved to Padua to earn a law degree, and his concubine) featured a competition over Maddalena's conspicuous inheritance. The legal battle pitted her alleged husband, the physically handicapped Giorgio Zaccarotto, and his father against the Paduan convent in which she had been placed for safekeeping. At the heart of the controversy lay the question of whether Maddalena had married Giorgio and then taken religious vows before her twelfth birthday.⁶⁵

⁶² Cecilia Cristellon, "Marriage and Consent in Pretridentine Venice: Between Lay Conception and Ecclesiastical Conception, 1420–1545," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 39 (2008), 389–418; Cristellon, *Carità e eros: Il matrimonio e la Chiesa veneziana nel Rinascimento (1420–1545)* (Bologna, 2010), pp. 185–248.

⁶³ Joanne Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (New York, 2001), pp. 41–44; Daniela Hacke, "Non lo volevo per marito in modo alcuno': Forced Marriages, Generational Conflicts, and the Limits of Patriarchal Power in Early Modern Venice, c.1580–1680," in Schutte, Kuehn, and Seidel Menchi, eds., *Time, Space, and Women's Lives*, pp. 203–21; repr. in Hacke, *Women, Sex and Marriage in Early Modern Venice* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 89–118.

⁶⁴ Giuliano Marchetti, "Il 'matrimonium meticulosum' in un 'consilium' di Bartolomeo Cipolla (ca. 1420–1475)," in Seidel Menchi and Quaglioni, eds., *Matrimoni in dubbio: Unioni controverse e nozze clandestine in Italia dal XIV al XVIII secolo* (Bologna, 2001), pp. 247–78; Cecilia Cristellon, "Ursina Basso contro Alvisi Soncin: il 'consilium' respinto di Bartolomeo Cipolla e gli atti del processo (Padova e Venezia 1461–1462)," in Seidel Menchi and Quaglioni, eds., *Matrimoni in dubbio*, pp. 270–303.

⁶⁵ See the following in Seidel Menchi and Quaglioni, eds., *Matrimoni in dubbio*: Cecilia Cristellon, "La sposa in convento (Padova e Venezia 1455–1458)," pp. 123–48; Paola Benussi, "Oltre il processo: itinerari di ricerca intorno al matrimonio controverso di Giorgio Zaccarotto e Maddalena di Sicilia (Padova e Venezia 1455–1458)," pp. 149–73; and Giovanni Minnucci, "Simpliciter et de plano, ac sine strepitu et figura iudicis: il processo di nullità

Especially among peasants and others in the lowest orders, marriage was often a casual transaction. Men who wanted to bed women exchanged promises of marriage with them in the present tense, which they then ignored. Women, usually pregnant, then went to court in an attempt to establish the validity of what they claimed to be genuine nuptials. On the men's part, these promises were often conscious frauds; sometimes both parties understood them to be jokes.⁶⁶ If lower-class spouses did not get along, they tended to separate without going to court, and one or both subsequently established liaisons with or married others. The three marriages of a 16th-century Veronese woman, Caterina Mantuanella, constitute a case in point.⁶⁷ Frequently, a married man who relocated formed a second family in his new home. When a husband went away for occupational reasons or to fight in a war and did not return, his wife—often neglecting to obtain unimpeachable evidence that he had died—considered herself free to remarry. From the mid-1520s in Verona and toward the end of the 16th century in other Venetian dioceses, when bishops and priests began seriously to enforce the Tridentine rules on marriage, these informal practices gradually became less common, but they never disappeared entirely from the scene.⁶⁸

Life Status: Concubinage

Emlyn Eisenach's study of marriage in 16th-century Verona provides the fullest account of this practice. Drawing on *cause matrimoniali*, visitation records, and prescriptive writings by unusually attentive bishops and their collaborators, she identifies two forms. Elite concubinage involved a man of high status keeping (*tenere a sua posta*) a woman of humble condition. Usually they did not cohabit, but sometimes he installed her in the marital home. Non-elite concubinage featured a relationship between partners of low status who for some reason could not or did not wish to marry. Neighbors, ecclesiastical reformers, and on occasion concubiners themselves referred to the women as "whores," but in practice there was

matrimoniale vertente tra Giorgio Zaccarotto e Maddalena di Sicilia (Padova e Venezia 1455–1458)," pp. 175–97.

⁶⁶ Ermanno Orlando, "Il matrimonio delle beffe. Unioni finte, simulate, per gioco. Padova e Venezia, fine secolo XIV–inizi secolo XVI," in Seidel Menchi and Quagliani, eds., *Trasgressioni*, pp. 231–67.

⁶⁷ Emlyn Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives, and Concubines: Marriage, Family, and Social Order in Sixteenth-Century Verona* (Kirkville, Mo., 2004), pp. 54–57.

⁶⁸ Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives, and Concubines*, pp. 169–76; Daniela Lombardi, *Matrimoni di antico regime* (Bologna, 2001), esp. pp. 101–42, 243–357.

a clear distinction. A prostitute provided sexual services to many men for money on a one-time or occasional basis. A concubine, in contrast, remained in a continuing relationship with one man over a period of time often extending to many years. He was expected to provide support to her and any offspring born of their liaison, mainly in the form of food and clothing, and to take responsibility for the children's education and placement in marriage or an occupation.⁶⁹

From an elite man's point of view, publicly maintaining a concubine made known to all his elevated social status, affluence, and power over inferiors. "A concubine was a luxury good, an article, one might say, of conspicuous consumption, like a coach."⁷⁰ If for some reason he found her inconvenient, he would marry her off to a non-elite man, often reserving the prerogative of continuing to enjoy her sexual services—in which case her husband, if he dared, might go to court to assert his rights as her legitimate husband. More often than not, a non-elite concubinator was consciously imitating his betters, thereby attempting, usually in vain, to enhance his reputation.

From concubines' point of view, entering into such a relationship promised, for the duration of the liaison, a higher tenor of life than they could otherwise enjoy—and in the long run, the prospect of marriage to men on their own social level, made possible by dowries (which they could not otherwise assemble) provided by their elite partners. For these reasons, their natal families seldom disapproved of such liaisons and sometimes encouraged them. From the point of view of elite concubinators' wives, spouses' extramarital relationships were at best a source of resentment. If the concubines were treated as well as or better than they, or worst of all installed in the family home, a wife might seek judicial dissolution of her marriage.⁷¹

Moved by his own sense of responsibility and/or at his confessor's urging, an unmarried elite concubinator might enter a "marriage of conscience" with his concubine and recognize or even legitimate their children. In 1497, for instance, the Venetian patrician Bernardino Dandolo took as his concubine Caterina di Bartolomeo da Galda, a young widow from the Paduan hinterland serving as a wet nurse in the home of his cousin Alvise Bembo. On 24 October 1500, they were married before a notary in the presence of

⁶⁹ Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives, and Concubines*, pp. 134–66.

⁷⁰ Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives, and Concubines*, pp. 146–47.

⁷¹ Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives, and Concubines*, pp. 134–77.

a priest and two witnesses, one of them a patrician; the groom furnished the bride's dowry. Early in 1514, Bernardino died. His will provided for his wife, whom he urged not to remarry; their two sons, Tomaso and Fantino, ages 13 and seven; and another son, an infant named Anzolo, whose mother was Caterina's younger sister. Bernardino's death precipitated a suit in the patriarchal court brought by his cousin Marco Dandolo against Caterina. Aware that validity of his cousin's marriage was indisputable, he took the tack of casting aspersions on Caterina's "vile" condition and morals, aiming to deprive Tomaso and Fantino of the right to inherit and ensure that they would never make their way into the patriciate. In April 1517, Patriarch Antonio Contarini issued a sentence affirming that Bernardino and Caterina's two sons were legitimate and therefore entitled to inherit and ordering Marco to pay all court costs. In this particular battle between patrician values and the ecclesiastical conception of marriage, the Church and Bernardino's survivors triumphed.⁷²

Life Status: Widows, Widowers, and Lay Singles

Since historians of Venice and the Venetian Republic have paid little attention to layfolk without partners, this brief section draws almost entirely on inference from other places. Elite widows had strong incentives not to remarry. Doing so would almost certainly deprive them of their children, whose late fathers' families would take them in. As many husbands' wills made explicit, remarriage would reduce if not eliminate any inheritance left to their spouses. And remarriage would make it virtually impossible to recover their dowries, which would return to their natal families. For elite widowers, the situation was quite different. Remarrying would bring a substantial new dowry, the usufruct from which could enhance their wealth. It might result in the birth of children, making it less likely that the male line would die out, though also entailing additional expenditure for daughters' settlement in marriage or convents.

If the opportunity presented itself, non-elite widows had good reasons to remarry. Not doing so might mean immediate or eventual destitution, as well as prompting suspicion that they were engaging in illicit sexual relations and perhaps sorcery. Non-elite widowers with few or no domestic

⁷² Silvana Seidel Menchi, "Ritratto di famiglia in un interno: i Dandolo di San Moisè (1514–1526)," in Robert A. Pierce and Silvana Seidel Menchi, eds., *Ritratti. La dimensione individuale nella storia (secoli XV–XX)*. *Studi in onore di Anne Jacobson Schutte* (Rome, 2009), pp. 99–125.

servants, especially those with children still at home, needed new wives to run their houses and care for young ones. Furthermore, both widows and widowers might well crave companionship and a licit outlet for sexual urges.

As noted earlier, nearly half the patrician men in Venice never married, most because family economic strategies precluded their doing so, some because they chose to remain bachelors—which did not of course prevent their keeping concubines. In part, perhaps, because they appear to have died at an earlier age, on average they held fewer, less important government offices than their married counterparts. Given that “the patriarchal husband and father [was] the ideal type in patrician culture,” bachelors constituted “a second-echelon element,” playing instrumental roles resembling more closely those of their married sisters than those of their married brothers.⁷³

Patrician women who desired to remain nubile but did not wish to become nuns had only two alternatives: remaining at home and eventually moving in with their married brothers as, in effect, unpaid servants; or becoming unwed and uncloistered religious. A few writers of the late 16th century sought to rationalize and gain recognition for this “third status.” In a short treatise issued in 1577, Bishop Agostino Valier of Verona, calling those who elected it *dimesse* (modest or humble ones), assigned them to “a second perfect grade,” just below that of nuns. Two years later, the plural noun began to be capitalized when the Observant Franciscan Antonio Pagani founded the Congregation of the Dimesse. This uncloistered institute, similar to the Company of St Ursula and following the same rule, spread rapidly in Venetian territory.⁷⁴ Since the possibility of a fully secular independent status for single women, eloquently articulated in the Venetian writer Moderata Fonte’s *Il merito delle donne* (1600), would have required an independent income and “a room [or better, residence] of one’s own,” it remained only a dream.⁷⁵

At least to my knowledge, the proportion of male and female non-elites who never married is impossible to say. Some but certainly not all soldiers and sailors remained single. That marriage was a requirement for

⁷³ Chojnacki, “Subaltern Patriarchs,” quoted phrases at pp. 247, 252.

⁷⁴ Gabriella Zarri, “The Third Status,” in Schutte, Kuehn, and Seidel Menchi, eds., *Time, Space, and Women’s Lives*, pp. 181–99, quoted phrase at p. 189; Cox, “The Single Self,” pp. 544–50.

⁷⁵ Cox, “The Single Self,” pp. 564–69, 576; Moderata Fonte [Modesta Pozzo], *Il merito delle donne* (1660), ed. Adriana Chemello (Mirano [VE], 1988), pp. 17–23.

Venetian subjects' attaining the rank of master in a guild-regulated craft, as in some German cities, appears unlikely. Wills studied for other purposes reveal the occasional nubile non-elite woman. For reasons outlined above regarding the remarriage of non-elite widows, one can infer that few women would have voluntarily chosen the single life.

Life Status: Religious Profession

In the Venetian Republic, as everywhere else in early modern Europe, all professed nuns came from the elite. The social range of professed monks, friars, and other male religious was somewhat broader. Only second-class monastic servants, *converse/i*, had humble origins. As indicated earlier, making surplus daughters nuns constituted an important element in patrimonial strategies. Until now, almost no one has recognized that the same economic imperatives dictated thrusting sons as well into monastic life.

Some men and women experienced a genuine calling to the religious life. Many others, however, did not: they were forced into monasteries and convents by elders intent on removing them from the inheritance stream. In the *fondo Congregazione del Concilio* of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, I have found 978 religious who petitioned the pope for release from their vows between 1668 and 1793—83 per cent of them men. About half of the petitions proceeded to judgment by the Congregation of the Council; 153 men and 68 women (38.7 per cent and 70.8 per cent, respectively, of those in whose cases a final decree was issued) obtained favorable rulings.⁷⁶

Reluctant religious from Venice and its subject territories naturally figured among those from all over the Roman Catholic world who petitioned the pope, although not in numbers approaching the throngs from the Papal State and the Kingdom of Naples. The legal stories their attorneys told resembled those from elsewhere: a wide variety of cruel physical and psychological means employed by elders that induced terror sufficient to propel them into religious houses. One unusual feature of the situation in the Republic was the secular government's prohibiting nuns and their representatives from filing petitions in Rome. As a consequence, forced nuns determined to obtain release from their vows had to flee to states where such a restriction was not in effect.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Anne Jacobson Schutte, *By Force and Fear: Making and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, 2011).

⁷⁷ Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Between Venice and Rome."

Conclusion

Space and life status, of course, are only two of many categories useful for approaching issues of gender in the Venetian Republic—or anywhere else. This brief essay, I hope, will stimulate scholars to explore other ways in which the experiences of men and women, elite and non-elite, occasionally converged and more often diverged.

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RELIGIOUS LIFE

Cecilia Cristellon and Silvana Seidel Menchi

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first, by Cecilia Cristellon, treats the concrete aspects of Venetian religious life and the ways in which they were codified and endorsed by the authorities. It analyzes the structures of the dioceses and the clergy; the language, organization, and control of devotion; the reform movements within the Church; and the relationship between ecclesiastics and the faithful. The second section, by Silvana Seidel Menchi, confronts issues that are more theoretical and theological: the osmosis between the religious and political spheres; the secularized perception of the sacred on the part of the Venetian ruling class; and Venice's ecclesiastical vocation which allowed it to confront papal power in the name of Christian values and to develop an ethico-religious identity independent of papal protection. In addition, it analyzes forms of consensus and religious dissent; the diffusion of Protestant ideas in the 16th century; and the diffusion of erudite libertinism in the 17th century and in the age of Enlightenment.

While this study covers a chronological arc that spans the 14th to the 18th centuries, it illustrates the crucial role of the Council of Trent in shaping Venetian religiosity, receiving or reacting to the demands for reform that were raised from various parts of the city on the lagoon. In addition, this chapter interprets crucial events such as the defeat at Agnadello (1509) and the Interdict controversy (1606) as aspects of a structural conflict that was fundamentally religious, even though the existing historiography has tended instead to interpret these as chance conflicts of a political nature.

I. Piety, Its Institutions, and Its Languages

1. Institutional Configuration of the Venetian Church and Jurisdictional Conflicts

From the end of the 12th century, Venice found itself having to manage a latent tension in the sphere of ecclesiastical jurisdiction that stemmed from a presence within the city of competing religious authorities, and the

situation grew only more complex following the Republic's conquest of the *terraferma*. Indeed, the city was home not only to the bishop of Castello—ordinary head of the diocese—but also to the Patriarch of Grado, whose jurisdiction encompassed the Venetian parishes of San Silvestro (where his residence was located), San Matteo di Rialto, San Giacomo dell'Orio, San Bartolomeo, San Canciano, and San Martino. Moreover, there was a palatine church with its own clergy (and, from 1581, its own seminary) led by the *primicerio* of the basilica of St Mark's, the head canon who was responsible not to the head of any metropolitan church but to the doge himself. The *primicerio* exercised his own jurisdiction in the parishes of San Giovanni Elemosinario, San Giacomo di Rialto, San Filippo e Giacomo, and Santa Maria delle Vergini.

The competition among religious authorities grew further with the annexation of the Friuli region into Venetian domains and the resulting fall of the patriarchal state of Aquileia in 1420: now, in addition to the suffragan bishop and *primicerio*, in fact, there resided in Venice two metropolitans: no longer only the Patriarch of Grado, who after 1440 would extend his jurisdiction to the territories of the suppressed diocese of Eraclea, but also the Patriarch of Aquileia as well, whose authority extended to territories well beyond the confines of the *Serenissima*.¹

2. *Patriarchate and Patriarch*

In the 15th century the Venetian Church went through a process of rationalization and achieved a greater centralization thanks to its change from episcopate to patriarchate. With the suppression of the patriarchate of Grado in 1451, the patriarchate of Venice was founded, and this, under the prestigious leadership of Lorenzo Giustiniani,² united the jurisdiction of the ex-metropolitan of Grado with that of the parishes of the old civic

¹ On Venetian ecclesiastical institutions see Daniela Rando, *Una chiesa di frontiera. Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche veneziane nei secoli VI–XII* (Bologna, 1994). On the ducal church, see Bianca Betto, *Il capitolo della basilica di S. Marco in Venezia: statuti e consuetudini dei primi decenni del sec. XIV* (Padua, 1984).

² On the passage from the episcopate of Castello to the patriarchate of Venice, see Silvio Tramontin, "Dall'episcopato castellano al patriarcato veneziano," in Giovanni Vian, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia tra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Venice, 1989), pp. 55–85; Antonio Niero, *Dal patriarcato di Grado al patriarcato di Venezia, in Grado nella storia e nell'arte (Antichità altoadriatiche, XVII)* (Udine, 1980), pp. 265–84. On the patriarchate, see Paolo Prodi, "The Structure and Organisation of the Church in Renaissance Venice: Suggestion for Research," in John Rigby Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 409–30. On Lorenzo Giustiniani, see *infra*, section II, and the included bibliography.

diocese of Castello. This territorial configuration of the Venetian patriarchate would remain substantially unchanged during the following centuries.³

The church that Giustiniani and his successors would lead and reform had a political, social, and cultural physiognomy all its own. Indeed, a multitude of factors rendered the patriarchal curia's operations both constant and politically influential: Venice's importance on the international scene, the presence in the city of non-Catholic communities, significant immigration, the close links between the patriarchs and the governing class, the exceptional juridical and humanistic culture of the heads of the Venetian Church, and, not least, the more or less ongoing tension between the *Serenissima* and the papacy, which led to a reluctance on the part of the ruling class to appeal to Rome in matters spiritual.

The role of patriarch, as that of bishop before it, was filled almost exclusively by members of the Venetian nobility, which the pope generally chose from a list proposed by the Venetian Senate, though at times the patriarch was directly nominated by the Republic and only confirmed by Rome, and at others simply imposed by the Roman pontiff. Most of the candidates were ecclesiastics, especially since the few laymen proposed had to be consecrated in Rome following their nomination. Before assuming their post, these men had frequently undertaken political and diplomatic service for the Republic.

With its choice of patriarch, the *Serenissima* marked out its political coordinates in relation to the Apostolic See: it could even express the idealized aspiration of a reunified Venetian Church under its own auspices by choosing as patriarch the *primicerio*, head of the ducal church.⁴ Though a member and an expression of the Venetian nobility, the patriarch was not, however, subordinate to it. The ruling class, for its part, maintained an instinctive mistrust for the head of the Venetian Church and to all nobles who chose to dedicate themselves to an ecclesiastical career, suspected of serving the papacy to the detriment of the Republic's interests.⁵ Such a dynamic materialized even when the *primicerio* himself was head of the

³ Bruno Bertoli, "Introduzione," in Bertoli, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Seicento* (Venice, 1992), pp. 5–16.

⁴ Gaetano Cozzi, "Note su Giovanni Tiepolo, primicerio di San Marco e Patriarca di Venezia: l'unità ideale della chiesa veneta," in Bruno Bertoli, ed., *Chiesa Società e Stato a Venezia* (Venice, 1994), pp. 121–50.

⁵ Giuseppe Del Torre, "'Dalli preti è nata la servitù di questa repubblica.' Ecclesiastici e segreti di stato nella Venezia del Quattrocento," in Stefano Gasparri, Giovanni Levi, and Pierandrea Moro, eds., *Venezia. Itinerari per la storia della città* (Bologna, 1997), pp. 131–58.

patriarchal see. This attitude would only start to change with the onset of the War of Candia (1644–69), during which time, given the *Serenissima's* grave difficulties, ecclesiastics often played an important role in negotiations between Rome and Venice, at which time the latter not only ceased blocking their career advancement within the Church but also supported their rise to the College of Cardinals and even to the threshold of the papal throne.⁶

The Republic had relegated the episcopal and later patriarchal see to the marginal Castello neighborhood, while the palatine church of St Mark's soared majestically in the political heart of the city on the lagoon, symbolizing that union between religion and the *Serenissima* which contributed so much to the construction and endurance of the myth of Venice.

The peripheral dislocation of the patriarchal see was unsuitable for the demands of diocesan government, as was noted on the occasion of a 1581 apostolic visit. In order to carry out its own judiciary functions and fulfill its pastoral mission, the patriarch, his vicar, and his secretaries were at times forced to leave Castello and go as far as the Rialto, for example, to question witnesses in a marriage case⁷ or grant a hearing to the faithful, as did Federico Corner (1631–44) in his regular, bi-weekly trip to his family's ancestral palace in the centrally located San Polo district.⁸

3. *Parish Configuration and the Organization of the Secular Clergy*

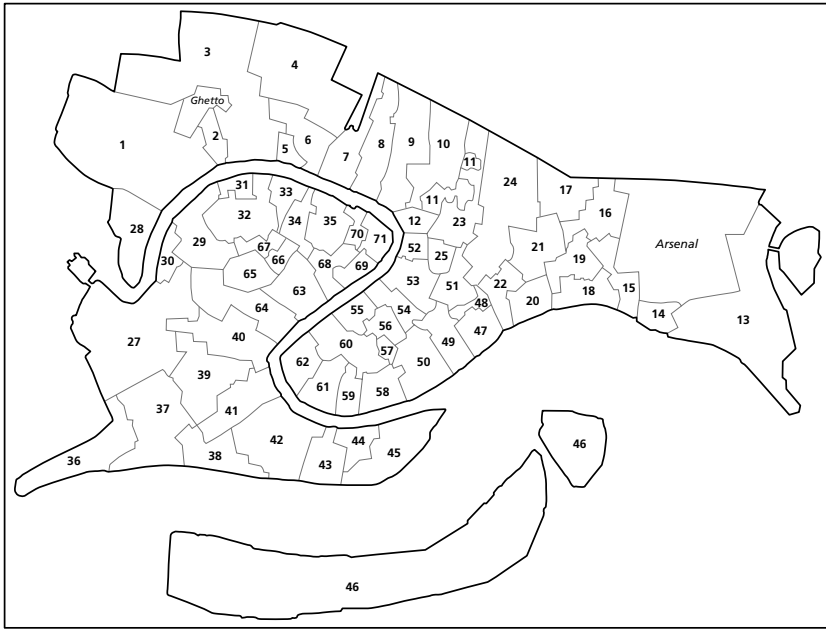
The Venetian diocese was divided into nearly 70 dioceses, most of which were collegial in nature—provided, that is, with a chapter in which three or four priests, various deacons and sub-deacons, and even some acolytes assisted the parish priest; some were joined to female monasteries and one in particular (the parish of San Salvatore) to the regular canons of the Santissimo Salvatore. Even in these latter examples the role of the parish priest was retained by a secular clergyman.⁹

⁶ Antonio Menniti Ippolito, "Sudditi d'un atro stato? Gli ecclesiastici veneziani," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 7 (1997): *La Venezia barocca*, eds. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi (1997), pp. 325–65, p. 336.

⁷ *Archivio Storico del Patriarcato di Venezia, Curia II, Causarum matrimoniorum* (from here on, ASPV, CM), vol. 12: *Iohannis Dominicus Ceti vs Camilla e Angelica, 1512–1513*.

⁸ Antonio Niero, "La diocesi dal Seicento alla caduta della Repubblica," in Silvio Tramontin, ed., *Storia religiosa del Veneto*, vol. 1: *Patriarcato di Venezia* (Padua, 1991), pp. 131–85, p. 149.

⁹ We have accurate knowledge of the dates relative to the 17th century: 72 parishes, including the cathedral, 11 of them non-collegial, five linked to female monasteries, and



Parishes of Venice

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. S. Geremia | 27. S. Croce | 51. S. Zulian |
| 2. S. Lunardo | 28. S. Lucia | 52. S. Bortolomio |
| 3. S. Marcuola | 29. S. Simeon Grande
(Profeta) | 53. S. Salvador |
| 4. S. Marcilian | 30. S. Simeon Piccolo
(Apostolo) | 54. S. Luca |
| 5. S. Maria Maddalena | 31. S. Zan Degolà | 55. S. Benetto |
| 6. S. Fosca | 32. S. Giacomo dall' Orio | 56. S. Paternian |
| 7. S. Felice | 33. S. Stae | 57. S. Fantin |
| 8. S. Sofia | 34. S. Maria Mater Domini | 58. S. Maria Zobenigo |
| 9. S. Apostoli | 35. S. Cassan | 59. S. Maurizio |
| 10. S. Cancian | 36. S. Nicolò dei Mendicoli | 60. S. Angelo |
| 11. S. Maria Nova | 37. Anzolo (Raffael) | 61. S. Vidal |
| 12. S. Giovanni Grisostomo | 38. S. Basegio | 62. S. Samuele |
| 13. S. Pietro di Castello | 39. S. Margarita | 63. S. Polo |
| 14. S. Biagio | 40. S. Pantalon | 64. S. Tomà |
| 15. S. Martin | 41. S. Barnaba | 65. S. Stin |
| 16. S. Ternita | 42. S. Trovaso | 66. S. Agostin |
| 17. S. Giustina | 43. S. Agnese | 67. S. Boldo |
| 18. S. Giovanni in Bragora | 44. S. Vio | 68. S. Aponal |
| 19. S. Antonin | 45. S. Gregorio | 69. S. Silvestro |
| 20. S. Provolo | 46. S. Eufemia | 70. S. Mattio |
| 21. S. Severo | 47. S. Marco | 71. S. Giovanni Elemosinario |
| 22. S. Zuane Novo | 48. S. Basso | |
| 23. S. Marina | 49. S. Geminian | |
| 24. S. Maria Formosa | 50. S. Moisè | |
| 25. S. Lio | | |
| 26. S. Elisabetta del Lido | | |

Map 9.1. The Parishes of Venice.

Based on an old privilege newly confirmed by the papacy, Venetian parish priests were elected by the heads of the families in a given parish. In the case of collegial churches, as recognized in a bull of Pope Clement VII (1526), the choice of the priest belonged to the chapter who elected one of its own. The patriarch's role consisted in giving his confirmation to the elected candidate via an eventual examination to certify the nominee's cultural suitability. While this confirmation was at times denied, if a candidate were held in particular esteem by his parishioners, such an act could give rise to unrest; and if the candidate enjoyed protection from on high, his backers might even be induced to appeal to the papal nuncio, even running the risk of increasing Roman control over the Venetian Church and losing time-honored privileges, as well as infringing a decree of the Senate which, following a bull of Pope Pius IV, had prohibited any appeals to those whose were denied confirmation, even to the nuncio himself.¹⁰

Ever since the 12th century, the secular clergy had been organized in congregations, nine in all since the end of the 13th century, that were also open to laymen. Each congregation was linked to a church and headed by an archpriest or *preposito* assisted by deacons. Their objectives were the cultivation of common prayer, both spiritual and material mutual assistance, and the organization of respectable burials and masses for their deceased confreres. The nine congregations regarded themselves as exempt from patriarchal authority, although it might be called upon to act as judge in disputes.¹¹

4. *Reform Movements and New Religious Orders (15th and 16th Centuries)*

The process of institutional rationalization formalized in the foundation of the patriarchy of Venice, discussed above, was preceded and accompanied by elements of religious reform thanks to the inspiration of eminent reforming figures such as Ludovico Barbo, Gabriele Condulmier (later Pope Eugenius IV), and Lorenzo Giustiniani, a certain renewal of monastic life via a return to observance of the Rule, the promotion of

one to the canons of San Salvatore: but the subdivision in roughly 70 parishes, mostly collegial, was a constant from the 13th century to the 14th. See Silvio Tramontin, "La diocesi nelle relazioni dei patriarchi alla Santa Sede," in Bertoli, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Seicento*, pp. 55–90.

¹⁰ Cozzi, "Note su Giovanni Tiepolo," pp. 134–47.

¹¹ Bianca Betto, *Le nove congregazioni del clero. Ricerche storiche, matricole e documenti vari* (Padua, 1984); Bianca Betto, "La Chiesa ducale," in Bertoli, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Seicento*, pp. 125–71.

institutions that responded religiously to specific social problems (the confraternities), and the contribution of non-Venetian churchmen.¹² In this last group, members of the various mendicant orders stood out particularly, such as Giovanni Dominici, a follower of Caterina da Siena, or the Franciscans Bernardino da Siena and Bernardino da Feltre, whose “moralizing and extremist offensive,” unleashed principally via their preaching, had considerable influence even on the political sphere. The reinforcing of decrees regarding blasphemy emanated by secular authorities during the 15th century and norms targeting homosexuality were closely linked to the sermons of these mendicant friars.¹³

The desire for Church reform manifested itself with authority at the beginning of the 16th century. Gasparo Contarini and Tommaso Giustiniani, members of the monastic order of Camaldoli, composed a *Libellum ad Leonem X* (1512) with a strongly critical stance toward the immorality and ignorance of the clergy, unthinking religious devotion, and theological bickering; and they advocated the frequent organization of both specific and general church councils and expressed a similar sensibility to that of Luther with respect to the benefits of making Scripture and the liturgy accessible in the vernacular.¹⁴

In the first half of the 16th century the city witnessed the arrival of new religious orders dedicated principally to various forms of social assistance, education of the city’s youth, preaching, and confession. After the Sack of Rome (1527), the Theatine regular clerks sought refuge in Venice in the footsteps of Gian Pietro Carafa and Gaetano Thiene, who had already founded there a hospital for the *incurabili* (1522) and the Oratory of Divine Love (1524), finding a home in church of San Nicolò dei Tolentini. The Theatines also provided initial support to Girolamo Miani, founder of the order of the Somaschans. Dedicated mainly to caring for orphans, the Somaschans also took over the spiritual direction of the three hospitals of

¹² Mario Fois, “I religiosi: decadenza e fermenti innovatori,” in Vian, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia tra medioevo ed età moderna*, pp. 147–82. For the confraternal phenomenon, see David d’Andrea’s contribution in this volume, along with its bibliography.

¹³ On the mendicant orders and preachers in Venice, see Fernanda Sorelli, “Gli ordini mendicanti,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2 (1995): *L’età del comune*, ed. Giorgio Cracco and Gherardo Ortalli, pp. 905–27; and Fernanda Sorelli, “Predicatori a Venezia (fine secolo XIV–metà secolo XV),” *Le Venezie Francescane* 6 (1989), 131–58. Regarding norms against blasphemy in 16th-century Venice, see Stefano Piasentini, “Indagine sulla bestemmia a Venezia nel Cinquecento,” *Studi Storici* 40 (1999), 471–549, p. 516; for the stronger norms regarding homosexuality, see Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros. Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York/Oxford, 1985), pp. 109–45.

¹⁴ See also below, section II.

the *derelitti*, *incurabili*, and San Lazzaro, in addition to directing the patriarchal and ducal seminary that was founded in 1581. Between 1536 and 1539, the *Giudecca* saw the rise of the first Capuchin convent (an order of reformed Franciscans), whose Father General Bernardino Ochino would flee to Switzerland in 1542 to officially join the Protestant reform. In recognition of their efforts in assisting victims of the plague, the Capuchins were entrusted with the votive church of the Redentore, which had been constructed in 1579 at the end of the plague. In 1550 the first Jesuits established themselves in Venice after Ignatius Loyola, having been absolved of accusations of heresy, obtained approval for his order's rule from Paul III, thanks to the intercession of the Venetian cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1540). It was in the heart of the *Serenissima*, in fact, that the Jesuits founded one of their first colleges, alongside another in Padua in competition with the city's university—a competition that reached a breaking point when the Jesuits even began conferring academic degrees.¹⁵

The Republic's attitude towards the new orders, and the Jesuits in particular, was ambivalent: as directly subject to the pope, they were viewed with diffidence, an attitude which led to the expulsion of Loyola's followers during the Interdict controversy (1606). But the city was also willing to listen to their proposals and come under their influence. The Jesuit Benedetto Palmio's preaching against comic theater, for example, had a direct impact on the Council of Ten's decision to ban such representations;¹⁶ his moralizing work was responsible for the foundation of the Casa delle Zitelle—an important charitable institution for "indigent young women of great beauty" who, as such, ran the risk of being induced into prostitution. The project fired the minds of Venice's most illustrious noblewomen who lavished the house with enormous bequests, thus setting an example for the female elite of generations to come.¹⁷

¹⁵ On the new religious orders in Venice, see Silvio Tramontin, "Venezia tra riforma cattolica e riforma protestante," in Tramontin, ed., *Storia religiosa del Veneto*, 1:91–130, pp. 124–26 and bibliography. In addition, on the Theatines, see Andrea Vanni, 'Fare diligente inquisizione.' *Gian Pietro Carafa e le origini dei chierici regolari teatini* (Rome, 2010), particularly pp. 123–33 for Venice; on the Somaschans and Jesuits, see Maurizio Sangalli, *Cultura, politica e religione nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento. Gesuiti e Somaschi a Venezia* (Venice, 1999). On the Jesuits and the University of Padua, see Maurizio Sangalli, *Università accademie gesuiti: cultura e religione a Padova tra Cinque e Seicento* (Trieste, 2001), pp. VII–XX; Paul Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 2002), pp. 479–483; and Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance. Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera* (London, 2007).

¹⁶ Sangalli, *Cultura, politica e religione*, particularly p. 122 in reference to Palmio.

¹⁷ On the Zitelle in Venice, see Monica Chojnacka, "Women, Charity and Community in Early Modern Venice: The Casa delle Zitelle," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51 (1998), 68–91;

5. *The Council of Trent*

The work of the new religious orders in Venice was in line with a militant conception of religiosity that emerged triumphant at the Council of Trent.¹⁸ The decrees of the council came into force in Venice with the synod held by the patriarch Giovanni Trevisan on 17 September 1564, when they were solemnly proclaimed in the cathedral and all priests in attendance publicly swore to respect them. The same ceremony was repeated, shortly thereafter, by the doge and the Venetian government, instituting the decrees as laws of the Republic.¹⁹

The decrees of Trent proclaimed, among other things, obligatory residence for bishops, the annual convocation of a synod, and the institution of a seminary for the preparation of priests; they underlined the obligation of annual confession; they prescribed the compilation of a baptismal and marriage register on the part of parish priests and, as we shall see, they assigned him an essential role in the validity of the nuptial union, which underwent revolutionary changes both with regard to its definition and to the rituals according to which it could (and had) to be stipulated. These were provisions that tended to delineate an ideal-type of the parish priest, at once pastor and civil functionary, knowledgeable of his flock but distinct from them, able to identify deviance and make possible inquisitorial censorship by suspending absolution in case of sins stained with heresy.²⁰

Though the patriarch Trevisan had officially introduced the dispositions of the Council of Trent in the Venetian diocese, it was only with the apostolic visit of 1581 that they truly went into effect, while certain precepts, such as the annual convocation of a synod, would be systematically neglected. It would be the patriarch Lorenzo Priuli (1590–1600) who would truly confront the challenge of promoting and enforcing the

Barbara Boccazzi Mazza, "Governare i 'luoghi pii': La casa delle Zitelle," *Studi veneziani* 49 (2005), 293–300 esp. p. 298 regarding the bequests of Venetian noblewomen to the Zitelle. See also Cecilia Cristellon, "Ritratto di una cortigiana del Cinquecento: Caterina de Medici da Verona e le sue vicende (1518–1582)," in Robert A. Pierce and Silvana Seidel Menchi, eds., *Ritratti. La dimensione individuale nella storia (secoli XV–XX). Studi in onore di Anne Jacobson Schutte* (Rome, 2009), pp. 147–76.

¹⁸ See generally John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002).

¹⁹ Francesca Cavazzana Romanelli, "Matrimonio tridentino e scritture parrocchiali. Risonanze veneziane," in Silvana Seidel Menchi and Diego Quaglioni, eds., *Tribunali del matrimonio (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Bologna, 2006), pp. 731–66, pp. 740–41.

²⁰ Angelo Turchini, "La nascita del sacerdozio come professione," in Paolo Prodi, ed., *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna, 1994), pp. 225–56; Elena Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio. Penitenza, confessione e giustizia spirituale dal medioevo al XVI secolo* (Bologna, 2000), pp. 541–71.

reforms of Trent in the lagoon, a task to which he dedicated himself zealously. In particular, he insisted on the residential obligations for parish priests and heads of collegial chapters (which, as we remember, were chosen by the parishioners), subjected them to a thorough examination and often denied nominees because of their inadequate preparation, to the point of forcing the Holy See to intervene and invite him to moderation.²¹ With the constitutions of 1592, moreover, the patriarch entrusted the preparation of the secular clergy to the city's most learned regular clergy, forcing the former on predetermined days to attend lessons concerning the interpretation of scripture and the teaching of *casi riservati*—those sins, that is, which could not be absolved in confession but had to be referred instead to the bishop.²² Priuli also organized a school of Christian Doctrine in every parish and published a catechism that would long remain in use in the patriarchate.

6. *The Relationship between Churchmen and the Faithful: Marriage, a Crucial Indicator*

The dialogue between the faithful and the men of the cloth—be they the patriarch and his vicars, friars, or parish priests—and its changes pre- and post-Trent can be analyzed most fruitfully with respect to the union of matrimony, the control of which allowed the Church to access the most intimate sphere of the individual and impact the formation and dissolution of the family, the most important connotative structure of social life.²³

With the affirmation of the sacramental nature of marriage—sanctioned by the ecumenical Council of Lyon in 1274—the Church had tried to encourage a public and solemn conception of the event, particularly through the decrees and blessing of the priest.²⁴ In the 15th century and

²¹ Tramontin, "Venezia tra riforma cattolica e riforma protestante," pp. 123–24.

²² *Constitutiones et privilegia patriarchatus et cleri Venetiarum illustrissimi ac reverendissimi D. D. Ioannis Trivisani iuris utriusque doctoris patriarchi Venetiarum, Dalmatieque primatis etc., iussu edita* (Venetiis, 1658), n. 122, cap. III.

²³ Cecilia Cristellon, *La carità e l'eros. Il matrimonio, la chiesa e i suoi giudici nella Venezia del Rinascimento (1420–1545)* (Bologna, 2010). For Venetian nuptial procedure after the Council of Trent, see Daniela Hacke, *Women, Sex and Marriage in Early Modern Venice* (Burlington, Vt., 2004); and Joanne M. Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 2001).

²⁴ For a synthesis of the construction of Christian marriage, see C. Donahue, Jr., *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages. Arguments about Marriage in Five Courts* (Cambridge, 2007).

up through the Council of Trent, the laity, however, paid little heed to such obligations, and the Church, while continuing to recommend the procedures of the decrees and priestly benediction, seemed to have given up trying to enforce them. The free consent of the betrothed was the only necessary prerequisite to a marriage conferred with regular sacramental value. According to canon law, moreover, the promise of marriage, followed by sexual intercourse, were enough to constitute a fully valid marriage. Marriage sites could vary widely: the church but also the loft, the portico, the family hearth, the bedroom, the study, the doorway, an inn, a boat, and even a prison. The minister of the rite could be a family member—generally the father, brother, or uncle, but sometimes even the mother, or the employer of the bride; those, in other words, who were responsible for the young woman or protected her honor, if she had no family.

Women were not entirely excluded from this role, but a man's presence was thought to be more reassuring for the bride. The conductor of the ceremony did not even have to be Catholic: in 1526 two nobles celebrated their wedding officiated by the doctor of the bride, a Jew, who urged them to give their nuptial consent "according to what God and your holy law commands."²⁵ It was a matter of little relevance to onlookers whether the officiating minister was a layman (be it man or woman) or an ecclesiastic, such that a contemporary observer did not remember whether the celebrant "was the priest or a young woman of theirs who was there (1517)."²⁶

This type of nuptial celebration was entirely acceptable not only to the lower clergy but also to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. We have full confirmation of it from Venetian wedding disputes whose judge was either the patriarch in person or his vicar. These documents show not only that the Church hierarchies abstained from adopting punitive measures against those who had contracted marriage without the presence of a priest; they furthermore did not even assume a blameworthy tone as they corroborated the validity of such unions, even defining them in their rulings as "legitimate and contracted according to the canons 'in facie ecclesiae.'" In Venice as elsewhere, similar nuptial celebrations were even represented visually in churches. Such is the case, for example, of the *Marriage of St Monica* (c.1441) by Antonio Vivarini, originally part of a series of episodes represented around the

²⁵ ASPV, CM, vol. 25: *Diana Minio vs Aloysium Caravello*, 1526–1527.

²⁶ ASPV, *Filciae Causarum* (from here on ASPV, FC), vol. 2: *Pro dona Lucieta de contrata Sanctae Trinitatis et ser Rocho*, 26 giugno 1517.

statue of Santa Monica in the church of Santo Stefano and now conserved in the Accademia. The painting depicts a nuptial celebration stipulated in the presence of the parents and two witnesses alone.²⁷

Not only was the presence of a priest pre-Trent not indispensable for a valid union, it was not even considered necessary for conferring a sacred character to the nuptials: an image of the Virgin, the open tabernacle, a crucifix, the oath—better if sworn while touching the Gospels—the sign of the cross traced on the bride's forehead, the invocation of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, the simple expression “as God and Holy Mother Church command,”²⁸ were all elements the faithful considered capable of placing marriage in the sphere of the sacred. Only when blood relations united a churchman to one of the betrothed was the former given priority in officiating the rite: if he were a friar, for example, the brother of the bride substituted the father in the ritual requests of consent. More frequent was the case of a marriage celebrated by a confessor who often functioned as a social mediator in cases of controversial marriages, and as an educator in the nature and goal of the marriage bond. In cases that involve members of the most erudite regular clergy, the actions of the confessor tend to reconcile the lay conception of an honorable marriage, in which the family plays an active role in negotiations and which considers the deflowering of a virgin as akin to murder, with the Catholic doctrine that requires solely the consent of the spouses for a valid marriage. We thus find confessors as mediators between spouses who contracted marriage in secret, encouraging and sometimes prohibiting its public celebration; confessors who take the responsibility of conducting negotiations with the father of the groom to celebrate honorably a marriage already stipulated without his knowledge,²⁹ or confessors who take on the role of nuptial ministers so as to control the atmosphere of violence that made marriage necessary: the confessors, for instance, might be called for in great haste by the bride's armed relatives who had surprised her in the act with her lover.³⁰ In each of these cases the social and pastoral functions are united in what becomes an occasion for spreading the official doctrine of marriage. When a spiritual father became involved in a marriage *in*

²⁷ See also the *Matrimonio di san Giuliano*, in the cycle of the *Leggenda di san Giuliano* (XIV sec.) depicted in the northern transept of the cathedral of Trent, and the *Sposalizio della Vergine* in the church of the Annunziata di Borno in the Val Camonica (1474/75, the latter an example mentioned by Jörg Traeger *Renaissance und Religion. Die Kunst des Glaubens im Zeitalter Raphaels* (Munich, 1997), p. 84.

²⁸ ASPV, FC, vol. 2: *Valeria figlia di Marco Rio vs Francesco aurefice*, 1501.

²⁹ ASPV, CM, vol. 9: *Marco Antonio de Stefani vs Lucretia q. Simonis Vacha*, 1506–1507.

³⁰ ASPV, CM, vol. 11: *Ambrosina de Balsonibus vs Marco Antonio Bacinetto*, 1509–1510.

facinore, he played a pacifying role and consequently made himself guarantor of validity of the marriage. In addition to speaking “comforting and spiritual” words, he might take the opportunity to remind bystanders of the binding value of the words of consent (to which laymen did not confer the same importance) and underline the necessity that marriage be freely contracted.

In the 16th century the presence of a priest at wedding ceremonies gradually became more common and legitimizing. This came about particularly in connection with the growing importance parish priests came to assume within the state structure thanks to the fiscal and public health responsibilities with which the Republic entrusted them, but also because of a synodal decision which made a license from one’s parish priest mandatory for contracting marriage,³¹ as well as a provision of the *Maggior Consiglio*, dating to 1506, delegating the registration of noble marriages to the parish priest.

However, it was only with the decree Tametsi (1563) produced in the last phase of the Council of Trent that the presence of the parish priest of at least one of the betrothed became necessary to avoid the invalidity of the marriage. Unlike what had occurred previously, moreover, the exchange of consent for the future followed by sexual intercourse no longer constituted marriage.

After the introduction of Tametsi in the 1564 synod, some parish priests took the decree’s provisions particularly to heart: trying, for example, to convince one by one their already married parishioners to renew their vows according to the formalities prescribed at Trent; or taking care to point out those in his marriage register to whom he had not given the priestly blessing because, after having promised themselves in marriage, they had had sexual relations without waiting for the wedding celebration as per the new directives.³² Exemplary measures were taken against concubines as well: in 1588 the patriarch Trevisan stubbornly denied burial in consecrated ground to a man who had died more than two years earlier because his family members had been unable to prove that the woman with whom he had lived had been his wife and not a concubine.³³ The severity of these actions helped redefine as deviant and worthy of

³¹ See Giovambattista Galliccioli, *Delle memorie venete antiche profane ed ecclesiastiche raccolte da Giovan Battista Galliccioli libri III* (Venice, 1795), book II, pp. 9–10.

³² Cavazzana Romanelli, “Matrimonio tridentino.”

³³ *Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Congregazione dei vescovi e regolari, Regista episcoporum*, 15, c.210. See also Giovanni Romeo, *Amori proibiti. I concubini tra Chiesa e Inquisizione* (Rome/Bari, 2008), p. 25.

exemplary reprehension centuries-old practices whose persistence would continue to surface for many years to come, both in the wedding ceremonial itself and in other venerable customs such as a lengthy premarital cohabitation of the betrothed. Marriage continued to be a multi-stage process, initiated with the stipulation of the nuptial contract and concluded, after some months or even years, with the blessing of the spouses in church; to the point that the patriarch Giovanni Francesco Morosini, a century after the publication of Tametsi in 1662, complained to the organs of civic government about the scarce application of the conciliar decrees. The Senate's response to Morosini's complaints was a year in coming, but they eventually imposed the Tridentine marriage model in Venice as well and constricted the various stages of nuptial rites into the sole ceremony of a celebration in church. Only the 18th century, however, would see the regularization of the practice of blessing a marriage on the day of its stipulation or in the days immediately following.³⁴

The norms of Tametsi brought important modifications not only to the lives of the faithful but also in the dialogue between them—especially women—and ecclesiastical institutions. No longer a basis for valid marriage, vows followed by sexual relations (which had constituted the principal material for discussion in marriage tribunals) left ecclesiastical jurisdiction to become the responsibility of the secular authorities. In 1577 the Council of Ten assigned the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia* jurisdiction over deflowerings with a promise of marriage and over clandestine marriages in general: that is to say, over the gamut of normal marriage arrangements before Trent.³⁵ The patriarch thus lost jurisdiction over the most common types of matrimonial disputes up to the decree of Tametsi. In front of lay judges, responsible for rape instead of marriage, women ceased to refer the words and gestures of the *affectus*, which in the period before Trent constituted the presumption of consent (and thus of marriage), and in order to obtain a favorable sentence they began to recount an aggression they had suffered rather than a life lived in common, thus expressing—and interjecting—the sense of sin now attached which in the past had been accepted, and which was now condemned despite its

³⁴ Cavazzana Romanelli "Matrimonio tridentino"; Volker Hunecke, *Die venetianische Adel am Ende der Republik 1647–1797. Demographie, Familie, Haushalt* (Tübingen, 1995), pp. 110–27.

³⁵ Renzo Derosas, "Gli esecutori sopra la bestemmia," in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato società e giustizia* (Rome, 1980), pp. 431–528.

persistence.³⁶ The decrees of the Council of Trent interrupted an ongoing dialogue over matrimonial matters between the patriarch and the faithful. Before Trent decreed the publicly celebrated union in church in the presence of a parish priest to be the only valid marriage, the laity had been legitimated in either supporting or censuring a union in the presence of ecclesiastical authorities according to parameters established by a code of signs and communal values. The entire community was attentive to the formation and dissolution of the couple and could be called upon to attest to the existence of a marriage that received formal recognition in the sentence of an ecclesiastical judge, acting as an arbiter between the two sides. After Trent, the marriage judge needed to consider only the respect of the necessary formal criteria that validated the bond and which were verifiable simply by consulting the parochial registers without any involvement of the community.

Before the Council of Trent, nuptial consent could ultimately only be verified in conscience. This made sure that patriarchs and vicars having to investigate the existence of a marriage entered into particularly intense dialogues, often assuming the tone of a confession. This was particularly true when the need to determine a party's will brought the arbiters face to face with young brides, sometimes even children, who were easily subject to parental authority and influence. The establishment of documentable and systematically verifiable criteria for determining a valid marriage deprived the patriarch and his vicars of that access to the female conscience and transferred to confessors alone the functions, such as the verification of consent, which had previously been a terrain shared with the ecclesiastical judge.

7. *Devotion*

Venetian religiosity had some constant characteristics that were manifested above all in terms of popular piety, and some that were more variable due to the influence of historical and political contingencies. With regard to the cult of innumerable saints that animated the Venetian

³⁶ On the words and gestures of affection that constituted presumption of matrimony, see Cecilia Cristellon, "Public Display of Affection. The Making of Marriage in the Venetian Courts before the Council of Trent (1420–1545)," in Sara F. Matthews, ed., *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy* (Burlington, Vt., 2010), pp. 173–98. On the strategies and linguistic aspects of post-Tridentine "rape" trials, see Georgia Arrivo, *Seduzioni, promesse, matrimoni. Il processo per stupro nella Toscana del Settecento* (Rome, 2006).

devotional universe, it is possible to piece together a history thanks to onomastic and toponymic analyses, through various forms of art (both popular art and the products of aristocratic patronage), the dedication of churches, altars, and chapels, the cult of relics, and the denomination of confraternities (also known as *fraterne* or *scuole*), special associations which met under the aegis of a particular saint within a parish or diocese for devotional ends, mutual assistance, and the defense of common interests.³⁷

Naturally, it is not possible to analyze the history of all the varied cults of individual saints. We shall, however, mention several of them: that of St Mark, whose *translatio* constituted the allegorical representation of the political unification of the lagoon under the doges. His cult represented the nucleus of the Venetian civic conscience, thanks to which religious and civic values became inseparable. Patron of the city alongside Theodore, Mark personified the Venetian State, which celebrated its victories in battle to the cry of “viva San Marco.” In Renaissance political thought, it was through the evangelist that the doge acquired his divine *potestas*. Indeed, the doges modeled their own relationship with St Mark on that of the popes with St Peter. As those who guarded Peter’s relics had inherited his authority, thus the doges did with Mark. As the cult of the apostle gave Rome its autonomy, thus the cult of the evangelist guaranteed Venetian independence.

The experience of the Crusades, during which the remains of many a saint were robbed, and Byzantine influence help explain the popularity in Venice of saints otherwise rare in the West but common in the Christian East, such as the prophets of the Old Testament. Some saints owed their prominence in the city’s devotional life to a particular event in Venice’s history, like Santa Marina, to whom was attributed the merit of the reconquest of Padua in 1509. San Nicola, as protector of sailors, naturally enjoyed great esteem in the city on the lagoon: after the Virgin, he was, during the Middle Ages, one of the most universally popular saints.³⁸ Other saints were dear to the Church universal yet at the same time almost Venetian: saints such as Roche who, after the successful theft of his relics in the 15th century, the city’s liberation from the plague, and the erection of a *scuola* in his honor had in Venice one the principal sites of his cult. Others

³⁷ Antonio Niero, Giovanni Musolino, and Silvio Tramontin, *Santità a Venezia* (Venice, 1972).

³⁸ Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Early Modern Venice* (Princeton, N.J., 1981), pp. 78–101.

were merely local saints, like Lorenzo Giustiniani, who died in an “odor of sanctity” and was venerated by his fellow citizens long before his cult was officially recognized in 1690.

We shall briefly track the popularity of Giustiniani’s cult so as to delineate the ways in which this osmosis between official and popular piety might be manifested. The first patriarch was invoked by the faithful in the case of plague, and preferred even to Sebastian and Roche, the saints traditionally called upon in such instances and officially canonized. This was likely owed to the fact that civic tradition still preserved memories of Giustiniani’s repeated interventions, first as canon and then as bishop, both in organizing the city’s devotional life with processions, rites and penitential lauds against the plague, and in interceding with Pope Nicholas V to grant particular indulgences to those who aided the plague-stricken. The Laurentian cult was promoted by members of his congregation (San Giorgio in Alga), by the patriarchate who hoped to see the canonization of its illustrious founder, and by the Republic who stood to gain prestige from the sanctification of a member of its own ruling class and one who had participated in various diplomatic missions in its favor. All of the above promoted the veneration of Giustiniani among the populace: keeping the memory of his actions alive, commissioning from Jacopo Bellini a half-length funerary statue in order to favor his contact with the devout for healing purposes according to the demands of popular piety, and having him depicted visually as a *beato*. The first request to institute a regular canonization trial for Giustiniani was forwarded to Rome by the Venetian Senate less than twenty years after his death, in concurrence with the alliance between the papacy and Venice for the crusade against the Ottomans. The question became urgent, however, by the post-Tridentine period, when the cult of saints was enjoying enormous success; having a saint who had been a member of the patriciate and a founder of the Venetian patriarchate would represent an important diplomatic card to play in Venice’s negotiations with the monarchies of Europe. Giustiniani’s canonization was obtained only at the end of the 17th century, and with the help of a Venetian pope. It coincided with a phase of political and military recovery for the Republic that needed to be given a certain luster: in the context of the Morea campaign, Venetian troops had reconquered the fortresses of Malvasia, Canina, and Valona, an enterprise for which the *Serenissima* would gain international recognition nine years later at Carlowitz. According to its pope, Venice’s religious piety “would be the preservative of its duration until the end of time,” and the Republic’s new commitment to battle against the Ottomans helped it to merit the

canonization of its saint. In terms of public piety, the Laurentian cult ceased with the fall of the Republic, but it was kept alive, though weakened, in popular devotions.³⁹

Both popular and official religiosity in the 17th and 18th centuries reflected the theology that had been affirmed at Trent, arguing against Protestants for the real presence of Christ in the consecrated host, and promoting a greater frequenting of the sacraments and a more intense approach to religious devotions. It was a religiosity still greatly conditioned by fears of plague, but also—as had occurred in the 15th century—by the Ottoman peril, especially after the wars of Candia (1644–69) and the Peloponnese (1648–99 and 1714–18). This piety was externalized in the multiplication of masses, religious functions, and processions; and in the erection of votive temples as in the flowering of *capitelli*, which attributed a central role to the Eucharist (displayed in most churches on a daily basis) both in the liturgy and in the lives of the faithful, in conformity with the desire of patriarch Giovanni Tiepolo (1619–31). It was, lastly, a religiosity strongly Marian in nature, both in the rites of official piety and in popular devotion, and further encouraged by the official institution of the cult of the Nicopeia Madonna on the part of the *primicerio* and later patriarch Tiepolo, who in 1617 had an altar and eventually homonymous chapel constructed in the Basilica of St Mark. Also Marian in inspiration was the temple of the Salute commissioned at the end of the 1630 plague by the Senate, while in an analogous occasion in the 16th century it had devoted the Palladian church to Christ Il Redentore; to the Virgin were dedicated the church of the Pianto (1647) in concurrence with the War of the Peloponnesus and the temple of Pellestrina at the conclusion of the War of the Morea: examples of a state piety in full step with the popular religiosity which saw the faithful invoke the aid of the Virgin Mary as well as that of Saint Anthony in the unequal struggle against the “infidels” through processions, masses, devotions, and the recitation of the rosary (a practice that reached its height in the 17th century).⁴⁰ Popular devotion to the Madonna also manifested itself in the older forms (documented with certainty from the 15th century and belonging to the category of magic by contact) of the *madonne vestite*. These were Marian *simulacra*,

³⁹ Antonio Niero, “Pietà popolare e interessi politici nel culto di san Lorenzo Giustiniani,” *Archivio Veneto* 117 (1981), 197–224.

⁴⁰ On St. Anthony of Padua, see Antonio Niero’s contribution in Silvio Tramontin, Antonio Niero, Giovanni Musolino, and Carlo Candiani, *Biblioteca agiografica veneziana*, vol. 2: *Culto dei Santi a Venezia* (Venice, 1965), pp. 81–82.

generally linked to a particular confraternity and mainly destined for processional use, which were often adorned with precious clothing donated by the faithful. The donors could even reserve the right to have these garments returned to them for their own use, in the archaic conviction that a garment worn by the Virgin (identified with her *simulacrum*) could protect its wearer.

The confraternal phenomenon grew extensively in the 17th and 18th centuries. It should be remembered how, in the 18th century, this development took the atypical form of religious companies and confraternities that arose around the *capitelli*—a uniquely spontaneous form of popular piety which was resisted by the authorities worried about this expansion of associative piety and the potential conflicts linked to its management.

Three specific devotional phenomena had their origins in the 18th century: the movement of the *Esercizi Spirituali* or *Missioni popolari*,⁴¹ promoted with great success in the 1740s by the Jesuits, who preached them four times annually in several churches for the space of eight days with an intervention of the patriarch on the first and last day; the Via Crucis (an ecclesiastical ritual that commemorates the passion and death of Christ), begun in 1747 in San Polo through the initiative of an innovative and erudite priest and complete with 14 stations painted by Giandomenico Tiepolo—a practice that would later be imitated in other parishes, but which only in the second half of the 19th century would meet with full success and be extended to all parishes with the approval of the patriarchs; finally, the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus also had 18th-century origins.

With regard to the cult of saints, the 18th century stood out for the birth of several political cults. The canonization of doge Pietro Orseolo (1731), for example, occurred in a period in which the cult of the doges was being revived as part of a more general reinforcement of the Venetian State Church intended, however, to be complementary, not contrary, to the Holy See. In this same trend may be inserted the other 18th-century political cults, and particularly the official reproposal of the Venetian saints engineered by senator Flaminio Corner, though these would

⁴¹ The Spiritual Exercises derive their name from a work by Ignatius Loyola, which proposes a 4-week “training course” in meditation and practical methods of prayer intended to purify those who follow it from the disorderly effects of sin and instill in them the joy of being one with Christ.

generally remain phenomena of aristocratic devotion with little impact on a popular level.⁴²

II. *Piety, Impiety, Repression*

1. *Venice and Rome*

Venetian culture knew no boundaries between the religious and political spheres. While the aspiration to surround themselves with a sacred aura was common to European powers in the medieval and early modern periods, only political realities of the first order, such as the Holy Roman Empire or the kingdom of France, pursued this objective with comparable effects to those which can be found in a minor state of the Italian peninsula—in Venice. In no other political reality was the osmosis between the spiritual and secular spheres as pervasive as in the *Serenissima* Republic. The doge was *princeps in ecclesia, princeps in republica* [head of the church, head of the state], the basilica of St Mark was the doge's chapel—exempt from both patriarchal and episcopal jurisdiction—and as such was invested with the function of a state church. The Republic controlled the elite of the Venetian secular clergy through its power of appointment to the most important benefices throughout its territory. The ritual of state had a solemnity that competed with that of the feast days of the ecclesiastical calendar and a capacity to involve the populus that was probably even greater.⁴³

The Republic had no need for a privileged relationship with the Holy See, because it was itself the Church; its citizens went unharmed by the storms of history because they had God on their side (Rafaino Caresini, c.1314–90). The doges had to obey God, not the pope. From the 14th century, we find documents attesting the fact that Venice considered itself invested with a mission conferred upon it directly by Providence: those who opposed the elect city and the supernatural destiny it incarnated were guilty of opposing the divine plan. A consciousness of this mission deeply permeated the city's habitants, and not only those responsible for running the state.⁴⁴

⁴² Antonio Niero, "Spiritualità popolare e dotta," in Bertoli, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Seicento*, pp. 253–90; and Antonio Niero, *Spiritualità popolare e dotta*, in *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Settecento*, ed. Bruno Bertoli (Venice, 1993), pp. 127–57, with a lengthy bibliography.

⁴³ Muir, *Civic Ritual*, pp. 103–34, 185–211.

⁴⁴ Gaetano Cozzi, "I rapporti tra Stato e Chiesa," in Giuseppe Gullino, ed., *La Chiesa di Venezia tra Riforma protestante e Riforma cattolica* (Venice, 1990), pp. 11–36; Giorgio

The self-attribution of an otherworldly charisma by the state of St Mark served to augment an antagonism between Venice and Rome which constitutes the common thread of the Republic's political history in the 15th to the 17th centuries. Within the panorama of the early modern Italian states, conflicts with the papacy so regularly marked Venetian history as to support the hypothesis that the ruling class of the state of St Mark had developed a secularized perception of the sacred as far back as the 15th century.⁴⁵

The authoritative scholars of Venetian history who launched this hypothesis have, however, come to a reassuring conclusion. Even the most dramatic chapters of the antagonism that characterized the relationship between Venice and Rome in the 15th to 17th centuries may be ascribed, according to currently prevailing reconstructions, to a rivalry of a political nature: the two cities were either competing for political hegemony in Italy (before it fell under Spanish domination) or were aligned on opposite fronts with respect to dominant Spain (Venice being adverse to Spanish hegemony, Rome a Spanish ally). The periodic conflicts that opposed the city of the doges to the city of the popes ought then to be considered—this current direction of studies tells us—as events that merely disturbed the *événementiel* surface of history and which were regularly reabsorbed into the great subterranean current that ran through the golden centuries of the life of the *Serenissima* and conferred upon it a specific physiognomy: the profound piety of its citizens and their unbreakable vocation of loyalty to the Holy See. The expert eye of Philippe de Commynes, French ambassador to Venice in the late 15th century and famous chronicler, discerned in Venice “the most triumphant city that I have ever seen, that . . . where most solemn is God's service . . . I believe God helps them because they reverently serve the church.”⁴⁶

The affinity between the city of St Mark and the city of St Peter in the early modern period will here be illustrated by way of three brief portraits of eminent figures from Venetian history, all of whom left an enduring mark on the panorama of Venezia sacra: Saint Lorenzo Giustiniani (15th century), Cardinal Gasparo Contarini (16th century), and Saint Gregorio Barbarigo (17th century).

Cracco, “‘E per tetto il cielo’ Dinamiche religiose di uno stato nascente,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 3 (1997): *La formazione dello stato patrizio*, eds. Girolamo Arnaldi, Giorgio Cracco, and Alberto Tenenti, pp. 957–96.

⁴⁵ Cracco, “‘E per tetto il cielo.’”

⁴⁶ Elisabeth Crouzet Pavan, “Immagini di un mito,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, eds. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 579–601.

Lorenzo Giustiniani (c.1381–1456) was the protagonist of an experience of asceticism and flight from the world that aroused great interest in a city whose human resources were entirely absorbed in the pursuit of an extraordinary territorial expansion and economic power which reached their apex in this century. Yet it was precisely a life of prayer and renunciation, the search for the shadows and silence, and the assiduous practice of charity that marked this patrician as the most qualified candidate for the position initially of prior and later of superior general of the congregation of secular canons of San Giorgio in Alga, a gathering of laymen which in 1400 had retired from the world to live an intense spiritual life within their small community. These same qualities, made even more evident by the responsibilities he assumed in the direction of the congregation of San Giorgio, contributed to Giustiniani's elevation to the bishopric of Castello (1433) and later to the prestigious post of the first Patriarch of Venice (1451). A body of writings both ascetic and edifying in nature testifies to his broad, though not particularly original, religious culture. The Venetian Senate tenaciously promoted Giustiniani's canonization, idealizing him as the model Venetian patrician, capable of equal dedication to his homeland and to the Church, equally at home in both one and the other structure.⁴⁷

A city still basking in its splendor but approaching a crisis was the Venice in which Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542) came to maturity. Scion of a ducal family and blessed with great intellectual and organizational talents, his formative years were profoundly influenced by a friendship with two other members of the patriciate, Tommaso Giustiniani and Vincenzo Quirini. The youthful trio was united by a fervent spirituality which soon brought two of its members, Giustiniani and Quirini, to take monastic vows, the former in the Tuscan hermitage of Camaldoli. But despite the intense inner spirituality that appeared in the correspondence that continued to unite the three friends, the trio was never reunited in the cloister, because Contarini did not share the desire for the monastic life: in response to Giustiniani's persistent pleas, Contarini responded by contrasting the dignity of the *vita activa* to the choice of the *vita contemplativa* and arguing, in opposition to the solitude of the hermitage, for the value of a Christian vocation to be realized in the world. What he aspired to was, in truth, a political career, to which his ambition and talents soon opened the door. Ambassador to Emperor Charles V in 1520,

⁴⁷ A biography of St. Lorenzo Giustiniani is in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 66 (Rome, 2006), pp. 73–77.

in the Spanish kingdom in 1523, and frequent envoy to Rome in the following years, he had the honor of representing the Republic at the ceremony of Charles V's imperial coronation by Pope Clement VII in Bologna in 1530. When he returned home, Contarini, by now perfectly inserted among the small class of governing elite, was preparing to fill a series of the Republic's most prestigious offices—starting with his election to the Council of Ten—when Pope Paul III, who had come to value him during his Roman missions, awarded him a cardinal's hat. "These thieving priests . . . they've taken the best citizen we had" was the comment with which Contarini's principal adversary greeted the news of his elevation to the College of Cardinals.⁴⁸ The passage from one to the other state, from the laity to the clergy (his acceptance of the nomination implied his sacerdotal ordination) was not difficult, and there was no sign of trauma in the new cardinal: Venice was, after all, a minor power, in stasis if not in decline, while Rome was the focal point of a Church which claimed to be universal. In the service of this universal Church, the new cardinal put to use the intellectual and diplomatic talents that had distinguished him in the service of the Venetian state. As president of a commission of cardinals charged with preparing a program of Church reform in view of the recently convoked Council, Contarini would be responsible for presenting the pope with the results of the commission. The *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* [Report on how to reform the Church, 1537] contained some proposals of reform that were greeted with approval by Protestants—particularly the reform of the apostolic Penitentiary—but at the same time condemned Erasmus' *Colloquia* and sounded the alert to the dangers of its widespread use in schools. In 1541 Contarini had the chance to display his diplomatic talents as head of the papal delegation at the religious colloquy in Regensburg: he is given credit for the possible accord with Protestants on the article of justification which, for a moment, a brief moment—maybe just a mirage—was glimpsed at Regensburg. The extensive production of correspondence he has left us stands out for its very concrete pragmatism which implied the same ideas of discipline, ordered subordination to the ruling authorities, and conformity with current doctrine in managing the highest spiritual offices that had marked his actions as a citizen of the Republic.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Cozzi, "I rapporti tra stato e Chiesa," p. 23.

⁴⁹ Gigliola Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della Cristianità* (Florence, 1988); Elisabeth G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini. Venice, Rome, and Reform* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1993) (with an ample list of secondary literature). Among Contarini's works there stand out the treatise *De officio boni viri et probi episcopi* (1517), the

The Venice in which the third figure in this small gallery, Saint Gregorio Barbarigo (1625–97), reached his maturity was a marginal entity on the European political scene. Born into a family of great prestige, Barbarigo was raised with an eye to a political career. Indeed, just such a career was imminent when, after studying civil law at the University of Padua, he was chosen to accompany the Venetian ambassador Alvise Contarini to Munster as an observer in the negotiations in the final phase of the Thirty Years' War. After his return from the mission, during which he had the opportunity to represent a declining Venice to the European political forces on the rise, such as the United Provinces of Holland, the young patrician had a taste of public life with his first government position. Called away by a late vocation for an ecclesiastical career and recruited into the secular clergy, however, he moved to Rome following an invitation of Alexander VII, who had come to value him in Munster, where the future pope, at that time Fabio Chigi, had been present as papal legate. The success that his qualities earned Barbarigo came in Rome, not in Venice: canon of the cathedral of Padua, then bishop of Bergamo (1657), nominated cardinal at a young age (1660), and bishop of the wealthy diocese of Padua (1664), he would be a serious candidate for the papal throne. His dedication to the poor and sick during a plague epidemic provided one of the basic prerequisites for Counter-Reformation sainthood.⁵⁰ The Church whose reform he sought was, however, substantially the clergy: his commitment to promoting the preparation of the clergy and the decorum of ecclesiastical buildings came through in the erection of the seminary in Padua and the care he invested in the pastoral visits of his diocese. His opposition to the conferment of a degree in theology to Elena Lucrezia Corner Piscopio, due to her gender, was consistent with the values of the institution to whose service he had dedicated his life.⁵¹

Giustiniani, Contarini, and Barbarigo are only three examples of a wide array of Venetian patricians for whom a political and ecclesiastical career were interchangeable: men devoted to the spiritual life who took on public roles of great symbolic value for the Republic, or magistrates of proven

treatise *De potestate pontificis quod divinitus sit tradita*, and the treatise *De immortalitate animae* (datable between 1535 and 1537).

⁵⁰ Peter Burke, "How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint," in Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 48–62.

⁵¹ Liliana Billanovich and Pierantonio Gios, eds., *Gregorio Barbarigo: Patrizio veneto, vescovo e cardinale nella tarda Controriforma* (Padua, 1999). Also see his biography in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 59 (Rome, 2002), pp. 247–52.

political experience who placed this experience at the service of Rome. To a Republic that gave its best men to the Church, the Church responded by making them saints and respected cardinals and selecting from within the Venetian ruling class a veritable genealogy of popes (five Venetians ascended to the throne of St Peter between the 15th and 18th centuries).⁵²

2. *Venice against Rome: 1509 and 1606*

The public face of religion in the Venetian Republic, however, also bears a different interpretation from that proposed in the preceding paragraphs. This alternative view rests above all, though not exclusively, on two important dates in the city's history: 1509 and 1606. In the relationship between Venice and Rome there were other analogous moments to those in 1509 and 1606, but in these two years the antagonism between the city of the doges and the city of the popes manifested itself more clearly as a conflict of religious, not political, nature and as a structural, rather than a contingent, one. The Republic rose up against Rome inasmuch as it was "another Rome": it claimed, that is, an innate charisma conferred upon it from on high, and it generally opposed the papacy in the name of a higher authority, that of Christ and the Gospels. The events of 1509 and 1606 showed Venice to be the only Italian state capable of confronting the popes in the name of Christian values.

In 1509 a league of powers which included the principal European states (France, Spain, and the Empire) inflicted a catastrophic defeat on the Venetians which has gone down in history as the rout (*rotta*) of Agnadello (14 May). The definitive collapse of their state, which the Venetians had believed imminent, was avoided, but the *terraferma* state was taken apart and repartitioned, at least for a few years, among the victors, while Venetian expansion in the Italian peninsula was stopped forever. The plan to expand the state of St Mark over much of Italy—there are good reasons to believe such a plan was conceived and initiated—thus suddenly came to an end. The ruling class never forgot the lesson of 1509.⁵³

⁵² Gregory XII (1406–15), Eugenius IV (1431–47), Paul II (1464–71), Alexander VIII (1689–91), Clement XIII (1758–69).

⁵³ In the synthetic works of Venetian history, 1509 does not generally represent a date which marks an era. I believe the importance of this collective trauma has been underestimated. A reading of Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1903), vol. 8, cols. 247–332, esp. cols. 279, 300, 301, restores the sense of catastrophe that pervaded the city and its subject territories. All of Venetian historiography tends to make light of the trauma of 1509, even Federico Seneca's quite specific work, *Venezia e papa Giulio II* (Padua, 1962). For the conviction of many Italian political

From a military perspective, the defeat at Agnadello was a triumph for the king of France; from a moral perspective, it was the pope's victory. In 1509 Pope Julius II set his mind to acquiring Ravenna and the cities and territories of Romagna that Venice had occupied when the state of Cesare Borgia had disintegrated, and at the same time he intended to deprive the Republic of control over the major ecclesiastical benefices within the Venetian state. The pope thus resorted to a consciously political use of spiritual weapons, excommunicating the doge, the Council of Ten, the Senate, and the entire Venetian ruling class, and placing Venice and all its possessions under interdict. The *Monitorium contra Venetos* of 27 April 1509, the detailed document announcing the imminence of these measures, was an act of great severity (Sanudo: "a bull of extreme cruelty") intended to overcome the city's moral resistance.⁵⁴ The Interdict was a condition which struck particular fear into the faithful, as it ordered all the clergy to leave the territory in question, suspended celebration of the divine offices, and prevented administration of the sacraments. The city fought fire with fire, responding to the use of spiritual arms with more of the same: the Senate put its seal of secrecy on the papal decree and sent guards to all churches to impede its publication,⁵⁵ while some Venetians invoked the authority of Christ against that of the pope.⁵⁶ The most open challenge was an appeal for a Church council: against excommunication and the Interdict, the doge and Senate appealed for an ecumenical council and had copies of their appeal nailed to the doors of St Peter's and on a column of Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. This translated to placing the authority of a church council, understood as the true Church of Christ, above that of the papacy.⁵⁷ In the end it was military defeat which brought the city to its knees.⁵⁸

In 1606 an ordinary jurisdictional controversy between Venice and Rome, the so-called "Interdict controversy," evolved into a conflict of principles where what was at stake was Venice's autonomy as an ethical

commentators that Venice was attempting to create for itself a "monarchy of Italy," see Seneca, *Venezia e papa Giulio II*, pp. 14–15.

⁵⁴ The text of the *Monitorium contra Venetos* is reproduced by Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 8, cols. 187–204. For Sanudo's judgment of the *monotorio*, and that of the Venetians, *Diarii*, vol. 8, col. 169.

⁵⁵ Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 8, col. 170.

⁵⁶ Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 9, cols. 567–70.

⁵⁷ Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 8, cols. 170, 187 (*affissione a Roma*). The Venetians turned directly to the Patriarch of Constantinople to invite him to convene a council.

⁵⁸ Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 8, cols. 247–53, esp. col. 252.

and religious entity. This time, however, Venice found a theorist to give expression to the city's ecclesial vocation. From an *événementiel* perspective, 1606 was incomparably less dramatic than 1509—as demonstrated by the “war of words” with which the events of that year and the next were designated—but the theoretical elaboration was far more advanced. The Interdict dispute inspired a body of literature that constitutes the highest literary monument produced and promoted by a pre-unification Italian state, particularly in its conception of Venice as having an ethical and religious identity independent from papal supervision.⁵⁹

The protagonist of the Interdict dispute was Paolo Sarpi (1555–1623), a friar of the Servite Order (*i Servi di Maria*). It was he who transformed a controversy over jurisdiction—a regular occurrence among the old Italian states—into a moment of high politico-religious theorization and, later, of meditation upon the history of the Church. Over the course of a few months in 1605, the Council of Ten had decided on the imprisonment and deferment to civil tribunals of two clerics accused of serious, non-religious crimes. This decision was an assault upon the *privilegio del foro*, in other words, the unique juridical status in force in *ancien régime* states which exempted the clergy from the jurisdiction of ordinary courts, allowing them to be tried only in ecclesiastical tribunals. The pope, the jurist Paul V, asked the *Signoria* to revoke these and other recent decisions considered damaging to so-called “ecclesiastical liberty.” When the Venetians refused, Paul V struck the Republic with a decree modeled on the one from 1509: the doge, the Senate and those responsible within the Venetian government were excommunicated, and the city and its territory were placed under interdict with all its consequences, not only religious but also civil (marriages were null, babies born under interdict were illegitimate, etc.). Fra Paolo Sarpi, whom the Republic had drafted into its service in the *ad hoc* position of theological and juridical consultant, was the mind behind the strategy Venice would pursue in the conflict which followed. This strategy consisted in considering the excommunication and Interdict to be null, invalid and illegitimate, inasmuch as they contradicted natural law and, above all, Holy Scripture. Just as in 1509, the *Signoria* tried to keep the Interdict under wraps and forced the clergy to continue administering the sacraments. Sarpi's proposal to appeal to a

⁵⁹ Paolo Sarpi, *Opere*, eds. Gaetano and Luisa Cozzi (Milan/Naples, 1969).

national or ecumenical council, as an authority superior to the pope, was taken into serious consideration.⁶⁰

The Interdict dispute ended in 1607, thanks to the mediation of the French king Henry IV; but internationally the image of Venice would be marked by the conflict long after that date. The compromise to which the two parties agreed, quite honorable for the *Signoria*, was less than satisfactory to Sarpi, who would have preferred a more intransigent line; still, the resistance offered to the pope in 1606–07 aroused much attention throughout Europe, particularly in Reformed states, and had the effect of qualifying Venice as a potential ally of the Protestant powers (England, the United Provinces) in view of the serious tensions that were emerging in Europe by the second decade of the century.⁶¹ The correspondence between Sarpi and his follower Fra Fulgenzio Micanzio and the diplomatic representatives of England and the French Calvinists supports the hypothesis that the two Servite friars aimed to introduce the “Evangelio” in Italy,⁶² looking with favor, that is, upon the possible creation, or at least the tolerance, of a reformed community in Venice.⁶³

3. Venice: “Gate of the Reformation in Italy”

The Protestant or otherwise heterodox movements which formed in Italy had an extremely irregular geographical distribution. Large parts of the peninsula seem to have been completely untouched by Reformation doctrines, while elsewhere their spread is documented in multiple centers,

⁶⁰ Gaetano Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi tra Venezia e l'Europa* (Turin, 1979); Gaetano and Luisa Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi*, in Girolamo Arnaldi, and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 1–36. Vittorio Frajese proposes a different, less variegated interpretation, *Sarpi scettico. Stato e Chiesa a Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Bologna, 1994). Filippo de Vivo offers an innovative reading of the Interdict controversy through the lens of political communication, *Information and Communication in Venice, Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 157–248.

⁶¹ The compromise did not force the *Signoria* to revoke the measures which in 1605 had provoked Rome's condemnation.

⁶² The complete correspondence is published in Sarpi, *Opere*, pp. 635–719, with an introduction by Gaetano Cozzi.

⁶³ Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna. Dalla guerra di Chioggia al 1517* (Turin, 1986). For the very limited tolerance that merchants of the Lutheran evangelical confession enjoyed in Venice, see Stefan Oswald, *Die Inquisition, die Lebenden und die Toten. Venedigs deutsche Protestanten* (Stuttgart, 1989).

particularly urban ones.⁶⁴ In the territories of the *Serenissima*, the concentration of communities defining themselves as “evangelical” is incomparably greater than in any other Italian state, including the prince-bishopric of Trent and the state of Milan. In the history of the Protestant movement in Italy, therefore, Venice and its state were absolute protagonists, not only in terms of quantity but also for the quality of the testimonies: the chronology, sociology, and phenomenology of the spread and free discussion of the doctrines then defined as “Lutheran” or “heretical” are documented in Venice and the major cities of its dominion with a richness unparalleled in other areas of Italy. Any general treatment of the phenomenon that is not overly one-sided tends to be based on evidence in large part from Venice and the other cities of its territory.⁶⁵

Several factors help explain why from the 1540s on Venice could be considered the “Gate of the Reformation in Italy”:⁶⁶ the state’s geographic position and its intense cultural exchange with central Europe, the presence of a colony of German merchants, the concentration of printing presses which made it the unrivaled publishing capital south of the Alps, and a relatively high rate of literacy. But it was also the autonomy from Rome which the Republic, or at least a part of its governing class, claimed for itself in spiritual matters which explains the vitality of the Protestant movement in the Veneto with respect to other Italian centers, including the “*eretichissime*” [most heretical] cities such as Modena and Lucca.⁶⁷ It was a movement that was spontaneous, disorderly, and creative: groups of artisans or clerics who met to listen to or comment on the preacher of the day, small, organized, family based “churches,” circles of shopkeepers and semi-literate master-craftsmen who dedicated themselves to reading the Gospels, public wagers regarding the existence of Purgatory, even varied attempts to reform the liturgy of the Mass and “illuminate” the

⁶⁴ A map of the distribution of religious dissent in Italy is published in Silvana Seidel Menchi and Serena Luzzi, “L’Italia della Riforma, l’Italia senza Riforma,” in A. Melloni, ed., *Cristiani d’Italia, Chiese, stato, società, 1861–2011*, 2 vols (Rome, 2011), 1:75–90.

⁶⁵ This is true for the cities of the *Dominio* whose ecclesiastical archives are accessible to scholars. In some archives, access to documentation is limited.

⁶⁶ The phrase belongs to the preacher and general of the Capuchin order Bernardino Ochino: see Bernardino Ochino, *I “Dialoghi sette” e altri scritti al tempo della fuga* (Turin, 1985), pp. 28–29, cited by Massimo Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo vescovo ed eretico* (Rome/Bari, 2006), p. 55.

⁶⁷ There is evidence of the movement not only in the capital city but also in Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Treviso, Rovigo, in minor centers (Cittadella, Asolo, Gardone), in Udine, and in the centers of the patriarchate of Aquileia.

peasants who went to confess on Holy Friday. It has been proposed that some painters were also involved in the movement.⁶⁸ This exuberant array of micro-phenomena of religious dissent displayed its full fervor in the 1540s and early 1550s, retreated into the private sphere in the late 1550s and early 1560s, and met with harsh repression in the late 1560s and 1570s. By the 1580s, Protestantism in Venice had been reduced to a handful of cases that were quickly isolated and eliminated.⁶⁹

The following paragraphs will illustrate the phenomenon of the reception of Protestant ideas in Venice, a theme which has also been accurately analyzed⁷⁰ with respect to its aristocratic ramifications,⁷¹ through a discussion of two of its emblematic representatives: the bishop Vittore Soranzo and the notary Benedetto del Borgo.

Vittore Soranzo (c.1510–58) left his homeland and illustrious family at a young age in order to move to Rome. Leaving his study of law in Padua unfinished, he was ordained, since, like other young Venetian patricians of modest wealth, he aspired to a career in the Church. His expectations were not fulfilled, however, until the favor of the cardinal and famous scholar Pietro Bembo, who had supported him since his early years in Padua, installed him in the diocese of Bergamo, first as *coadiutore* to Bembo (1544) and then, after the latter's death, as bishop himself (1545). According to his own accounts, Soranzo's participation with the movement of Church reform dated back to 1543 and was born under the influence of the spiritualistic tendencies in the milieu surrounding Cardinal Pole.⁷² If this is true, Soranzo's theological and ecclesiological maturation occurred quickly: while the widespread spiritualism in Pole's circle left the institutional structures and sacraments of the Church intact, Soranzo came to Bergamo with a plan to reform his diocese in an Evangelical-Lutheran direction. The books and writings that he worked from—whose later confiscation has allowed many of them to survive until the present

⁶⁸ Massimo Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici. Il mondo di Lorenzo Lotto tra Riforma e Controriforma* (Rome/Bari, 2001); Fabrizio Biferali and Massimo Firpo, *Battista Franco "pittore viniziano" nella cultura artistica e nella vita religiosa del Cinquecento* (Pisa, 2007).

⁶⁹ Silvana Seidel Menchi, "Italy," in B. Scribner, R. Porter, and M. Teich, eds., *The Reformation in National Context* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 181–201; Andrea Del Col, *L'Inquisizione in Italia dal XII al XXI secolo* (Milan, 2006), pp. 271–79.

⁷⁰ John J. Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1993).

⁷¹ Federica Ambrosini, *Storie di patrizi e di eresia nella Venezia del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1999).

⁷² Massimo Firpo and Sergio Pagano, *I processi inquisitoriali di Vittore Soranzo (1550–1558). Edizione critica*, 2 vols, *Collectanea Archivii Vaticanani* 53 (Vatican City, 2004).

day—speak in a language that leaves few doubts: among them were principal texts of Luther's theology, such as the preface to the letter of St Paul to the Romans; ecclesiological programs for an evangelical church, such as Melancthon's Augsburg Confession; the Confession of the Lutheran Church against the interim also by Melancthon; and other equally explicit programmatic texts.⁷³

The audacity and clarity of the theological position documented by these texts contrasts, however, with the caution of the reforms that Soranzo actually dared to introduce in his diocese. The reforms were introduced quietly, but they nonetheless suggest the existence of a network of collaborators behind the bishop that was prepared to undertake the construction of an "Evangelical Church of Bergamo." Soranzo's most audacious initiatives, in fact, were the preachers whom he chose, who held views akin to his own spiritual sensibilities, the prohibition of preaching against "Lutherans," the appointment in several parishes of priests who had embraced the doctrine of justification by faith alone, the favor lent to one of these priests in his plans to marry a nun who wanted to leave her convent, and the attempt to restrain some of the more vulgar forms of miraculous superstition.⁷⁴ Yet these cautious moves were enough to spread rumors that the bishop was a "rotten Lutheran" and cause the Inquisition to bring him to trial in 1550, ending a year later with his conviction and abjuration. This latter, however was of a private nature, pronounced in front of Pope Julius III; the sentence too was quite lenient, given the gravity of the heresies Soranzo confessed, since it spared the bishop imprisonment and left him his position, though he was suspended from active duties.

While Julius III lived, Soranzo was shielded by the pontiff's hostility to the newborn Holy Office of the Inquisition and the *Serenissima's* protection, though he could not exercise his pastoral office; but when Paul IV, the father and patron of the Roman Inquisition, rose to the papal throne, the trial against Soranzo was reopened (1556–58). A providentially fatal illness spared the bishop from being convicted as a relapsed heretic, a sentence which normally called for the penalty of death.⁷⁵ Even before his death, the modest reforms Soranzo had tried to implement had been erased from the diocese of Bergamo, identical to what occurred with the

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Firpo and Pagano, *I processi inquisitoriali di Vittore Soranzo*; Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo*.

⁷⁵ Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo*.

cautious reforming innovations introduced into the diocese of Capodistria by the other Lutheran bishop of the Venetian dominion, Pier Paolo Vergerio, before he fled beyond the Alps.⁷⁶

Benedetto del Borgo (d. 1551) was also a bishop—an Anabaptist bishop.⁷⁷ Until 1549 he had exercised the notarial profession in the city of Asolo and had enjoyed the esteem of the most important citizens, including the *podestà* Francesco Nani; but theology (literally, “the speaking of God”) had such a fascination for this generation of Venetian subjects, that Benedetto abandoned his profession and became an itinerant preacher and Anabaptist bishop. To discuss him alongside a figure such as Vittore Soranzo, however, means associating an amateur with a professional in the science of God. A distinction should be made: while Vittore Soranzo, like Vergerio, had had the benefit of a theological formation, Benedetto del Borgo was self taught in sacred hermeneutics. His theology and biblical studies were nurtured by an intense fervor, enthusiasm, and Christocentric faith of which his notarial registers have left us clear evidence.⁷⁸

I believe it likely that Benedetto went through a period of adherence to the Lutheran-style reform movement that was quite active and widespread in Asolo and nearby cities; but it was this very vibrancy and success which ensured that, from a large base, the radical Anabaptist variant of the Reformation could recruit a church which in 1550 counted 150 members. This church, extending throughout the Republic’s territory, was strong enough to organize a synod in Venice in order to debate and define several fundamental theological questions, such as that of the human or divine nature of Christ. The documents we possess pertaining to this synod and the Anabaptist movement that organized it (Venice, 1550) provide us with an image of Benedetto del Borgo as a doctrinally audacious minister who possessed great authority and an inspiring eloquence.⁷⁹

Beyond the doctrinal positions he assumed (that Christ was “born of the seed,” that is, the natural child of Joseph and Mary; that the Gospels had been reworked and that it was necessary to identify these later additions;

⁷⁶ Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio: The Making of an Italian Reformer* (Geneva, 1977).

⁷⁷ Aldo Stella, *Anabattismo e antitrinitarismo in Italia nel XVI secolo* (Padua, 1962), pp. 41–43, 48–52, 55–58, 69–79.

⁷⁸ Silvana Seidel Menchi, “Protestanten im Italien des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in Michael Matheus and Uwe Israel, eds., *Protestanten zwischen Venedig und Rom in der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2013), pp. 27–43.

⁷⁹ Carlo Ginzburg, *I costituti di don Pietro Manelfi* (Florence/Chicago, 1970), pp. 21, 33, 40, 50, 65, 72.

that the elect were always persecuted and that persecution was a sign of election)⁸⁰ we must reflect for a moment on the profession in which his audacious hermeneutics and fervent piety matured. Benedetto del Borgo was a representative of the notarial class, a group which had a crucial role in the society of the Venetian Republic and other Italian states. Present for every business transaction, guarantor for every agreement, witness to every rite of passage (especially the stipulation of a marriage in all its phases), often called upon to arbitrate in every sort of dispute, the notary was the most ubiquitously entrenched professional in the economic life of cities, villages, and territory. That this very group contributed a numerous—very numerous—group of followers to the Protestant movement in the Veneto is a very meaningful piece of data, and one which scholars have only just begun to confront.⁸¹ The concrete nature of the profession, its closeness to the vibrant world of business, and its mediating role between governors and the governed corrects the impression of visionary abstractness, unreality, and blindness to the true balance of power that the cases of a Vittore Soranzo or Benedetto del Borgo might suggest. That impression is the result of a historical judgment *ex post facto*, of an inability to comprehend the past as it was when it was present: an error of which historians are often guilty. In the Veneto of the late 1540s, the *Evangelio* (in all its variations) was neither a marginal option nor an experiment extraneous to those enjoying real social power, as Benedetto del Borgo and the many notaries of similar sensibilities can attest. It was a concrete possibility, capable of attracting followers in some of the most dynamic social categories.

Benedetto del Borgo was arrested, convicted, and burned alive in Rovigo in March 1551. Six months later the Anabaptist community he had led as bishop was broken up and later dispersed thanks to the detailed confession of one of its principal members, the priest Pietro Manelfi.⁸²

⁸⁰ Stella, *Anabattismo e antitrinitarismo*; Aldo Stella, *Dall'anabattismo al socianianesimo nel Cinquecento veneto* (Padua, 1967).

⁸¹ Seidel Menchi, "Protestanten."

⁸² Stella, *Anabattismo e antitrinitarismo*, pp. 75–79. It must be remembered that inquisitorial trials in Venice and the Veneto only rarely ended with a death sentence. As an example of this inquisitorial moderation, see the case of Isabella della Frattina (1542–1601), a patrician woman of wealthy family who, after a trial and two years of reclusion (1568–70), was released by the Venetian Inquisition without further sanctions, despite strong evidence that pointed to her involvement in the Protestant movement. See Federica Ambrosini, *L'eresia di Isabella. Vita di Isabella da Passano, signora della Frattina (1542–1601)* (Milan, 2005).

4. *Libertine Venice*

If Venetian religious history appears to be dominated in the 16th century by the figure of the heretic in all its guises, the history of the 17th and 18th centuries seems to prefer that of the libertine. Between 1950 (Giorgio Spini) and 2007 (Edward Muir), the proposal to apply the term “libertine” to the philosophical and religious culture of the 17th century, not to mention the 18th (to Italian culture in general, and Venetian culture in particular) has met with much approval.⁸³ It must be specified, however, that in this historiographical period of more than 50 years the term “libertine” has evolved into an eminently flexible category. “Libertine” has been used to label attitudes, convictions, utterances, and professions of faith that are quite heterogeneous and partly contradictory:

- The philosophical doctrine of the mortality of the soul, of neo-Aristotelian stock, taught by Cesare Cremonini at the University of Padua in the first half of the 17th century
- Practices of natural magic and beliefs linked to these practices
- Necromancy and the belief in demons
- Widespread skepticism with regard to the soul’s survival after death, the very existence of the soul, the system of punishment and reward awaiting the faithful beyond the grave, Purgatory, the cult of saints
- “Machiavellism” and its various reincarnations
- Occasional outbreaks of anti-clericalism
- Isolated remains of doctrines linkable to the Reformation (Lutheran, Calvinist)
- Affirmations traceable to a substratum of popular Deism, according to which “everyone in his own law [= religion] can be saved”
- Systematic atheism or proselytism in favor of atheism
- Blasphemous rituals and dissolute behavior of a sexual nature
- Religious relativism and, in rare cases, the defense of Islam.⁸⁴

The multiform disaffection for the religion of previous generations as manifested in these inclinations and actions is linked to a crisis in Venetian

⁸³ Giorgio Spini, *Ricerca dei libertini. La teoria dell'impostura delle religioni nel Seicento italiano, Nuova edizione* (Florence, 1983) (with ample bibliography); Muir, *The Culture Wars*.

⁸⁴ Federico Barbierato, *Politici e ateisti. Percorsi della miscredenza a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Milan, 2006) (with ample bibliography).

religious culture, whose 16th-century origins lay precisely in the spread and repression of Protestant ideas. After a phase characterized at the beginning of the 17th century by the multiplication of magical practices and phenomena of witchcraft, the new century witnessed the spread—particularly among those involved in printing and bookselling—of a cautious skepticism, and it heard the uttering of professions of impiety which provided a counterweight to the intense, traditional religious practices and the new forms of devotion promoted after the Council of Trent. These phenomena were superficial, however, occasional, and of short duration: fleeting infractions of ecclesiastical discipline which none of the protagonists of such episodes truly intended to challenge.⁸⁵ A significant clue to the superficial character of this nonconformity was that, at no time in the entire 17th century did the Venetian Holy Office hand over to the secular arm (equivalent to a death sentence) a single one of those it prosecuted.

But not all veins of religiously corrosive discourse were limited to conversations with the barber, the hatter, or the bookseller who sold prohibited books under and, sometimes, over the table. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Venice experienced forms of libertinism that were more pugnacious and systematic and which had ramifications in the broader European culture. These thinkers, whom historians like Edward Muir consider precursors to the Enlightenment,⁸⁶ had three main centers of aggregation: the challenge to Spanish-Papal hegemony linked to the figure of Ferrante Pallavicino, the theory of the political imposture of religions, and the new localization of sexuality in individual and social life.

In the case of Ferrante Pallavicino (1615–44), who was born in Piacenza and took his monastic vows in Milan (he was a Lateran Canon), a long residence in the Venetian Republic helped breed a disorderly and impulsive talent. His visceral and volcanic pen was born out of the stimulus of contemporary politics and responded to the author's need to find a place in the spotlight of current events, in other words, he wrote from an instinct of self-promotion rather than from a real intent to influence the course of those events. After a first work which won him favor, at age 19, with the Venetian Senate (a piece which exalted the state which was hosting him)⁸⁷ and a series of *novellas* and novels of frequently erotic

⁸⁵ Spini, *Ricerca dei libertini*; Barbierato, *Politici e ateisti*.

⁸⁶ Muir, *Culture Wars*, p. 3. Giorgio Spini expresses the same judgment in *Ricerca dei libertini*.

⁸⁷ Ferrante Pallavicino, *Il Sole ne' pianeti, cioè le grandezze della Serenissima Repubblica di Venetia* (Padua, 1635).

or lascivious content, his vitriolic verve for political polemic would focus on three objectives: the arrogance of Spanish dominance (Venice's political antagonist on the peninsula), the vice-ridden Roman Curia and its abhorred Inquisition, and the Jesuits with their aims to monopolize youth education.⁸⁸ His instinctive ability to read the general mood, uncanny understanding of themes with immediate resonance in high circles, and rancorous memories of personal experiences led Pallavicino to pick subjects which, from 1641 on, ensured his writings an extraordinary success and aroused concrete interest outside of Italy as well. The most audacious of his texts, all of which were naturally published anonymously, was *The Celestial Divorce*, caused by the immorality of the Roman spouse, in which Christ asks God the Father that he separate from his spouse, the Church of Rome, on account of her depravity and prolonged adultery (1643). His earlier *Rhetoric of Whores* established an unholy analogy between the tricks of seduction of the courtesans (which Pallavicino knew quite well from personal experience) and the educational methods then in use in Jesuit schools.

The incredible resonance of this genre of writings earned Pallavicino the hatred of the Spanish governor in Milan and, above all, of Maffeo Barberini, currently reigning as Pope Urban VIII (1623–44). It was against the pope (“the barber who shaves Christ’s beard”), his nepotism, his lack of scruples, his unbounded greed, and the entire Barberini line that Pallavicino’s pen poured forth its most searing critiques. In doing so, the institutional persecution to which he exposed himself (prosecution, imprisonment) was less dangerous than the dagger of the hired assassins he would soon come to fear. To some extent, the prolific polemicist was protected by the *Signoria* and especially by the nobleman Giovan Francesco Loredan, founder of the Academy of the *Incogniti* of which Pallavicino was an eminent member, but they could not guarantee his safety (after all, Fra Paolo Sarpi had been stabbed on a Venetian bridge in 1607 during the Interdict controversy, probably by papal agents). Thus, in 1642 the publicist decided to take refuge in France. However, during the planning stages of his voyage he naively fell victim to a trap: an emissary of the Barberini family convinced him of the possibility of obtaining a post under Richelieu and offered to accompany him to Paris, but brought him instead to papal jurisdiction in Avignon. After being arrested, tried,

⁸⁸ Spini, *Ricerca dei libertini*, pp. 177–99; Muir, *Culture Wars*, pp. 61–107.

convicted, and sentenced to death for “the crime of *lesa maestà*,” he was decapitated in March 1644, not even 30 years of age.⁸⁹

In Venice, the theme of the imposture of religions never assumed the radical tones which characterized the theory of the three impostors. A mysterious treatise of this title (*De tribus impostoribus*), which it was whispered circulated secretly in Europe, grouped together the founders of the three monotheistic religions, Moses, Christ, and Mohammed, as perpetrators of sophisticated otherworldly impostures which aimed to ensure earthly power for the inventors and their successors.⁹⁰ There is no evidence that information or references to the blasphemous treatise were circulating in Venice; there was knowledge, however, of the parable of the three rings, which some scholars have considered the ideal breeding ground for the theory of the three impostors. The great notoriety of the parable of the three rings was due, above all, to a famous *novella* of the Boccaccio's *Decameron*,⁹¹ and of which we have clear evidence from the testimony of the “heretical” miller Domenico Scandella, known as Menocchio. In 1583 Menocchio recounted that parable to the Inquisitor of Aquileia with an eloquence revealing intense emotional participation: he compared the three monotheistic religions to three sons equally loved by their common Father, who wished to confer to all three and to none the ring which symbolized the supremacy of one to the others. Boccaccio's *novella* was thus not a symbol of atheism: the miller from Friuli concluded that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam needed to stop their disputes over who held the monopoly on truth, since all three were emanations of God, all men dear to God, and all capable of salvation in their own faith.⁹²

The theory of the imposture of religions, in contrast, expressed a tendency towards systematic atheism. Dazzling the imagination of mortals with hopes of reward and fears of punishment after death is the most potent inhibitor that can be imposed upon a collectivity: this idea occasionally surfaced in the intertwining conversations of grocers' shops, inns, and boats in service between Padua and Venice. In a city that had developed a precocious spy network,⁹³ the practice of private confession might

⁸⁹ Documents from Ferrante Pallavicino's Avignon trial are conserved in Rome at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Berb. lat. 6157.

⁹⁰ Georges Minois, *Le traité des trois imposteurs. Histoire d'un livre blasphématoire qui n'existait pas* (Paris, 2009).

⁹¹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, I, 3.

⁹² Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore, 1992).

⁹³ Paolo Preto, *I servizi segreti di Venezia* (Milan, 1999).

have appeared to be an extraordinarily effective means of control: what did the obligation of annual confession have to do with supernatural realities? Was it not evident that it was a means of attaining an all-encompassing social control?⁹⁴ In this context, the figure of Christ as legislator-impostor stimulated the imagination to the point of creating imitators, figures who gained quick notoriety as promoters of messianic movements, and found a following as such.⁹⁵

One of the predominant themes in the works of Ferrante Pallavicino and his fellow *Incogniti* was the legitimation of the sexual impulse as something ever-present in nature. The restrictions imposed by Catholic morality on the exercise of sexuality went against nature and thus against God, creator of that nature. This conviction found expression both in statements of principle, making use of the natural philosophy of Giulio Cesare Cremonini, and in the flowering of a genre of erotic or lascivious literature which reached its height in 17th-century Venice.⁹⁶ Both categories of testimony promoted an ethics of instinct that legitimated every type of sexual desire, including homosexual, inasmuch as they were inborn in the human constitution, and claimed a space for their expression.

The degree to which religious control over sexual morals had slackened by the 18th century may be glimpsed in a phenomenon that has recently (and rightfully) attracted the attention of historians. Venice was one of the principal theaters for a practice that spread at this time among nobles of the Italian states, the *cicisbeato*. This term indicated the specific relationship that formed between a married woman, her knight-servant (or *cicisbeo*) and her husband. With the full consent of the latter, the *cicisbeo*, a man often but not always celibate, took the husband's place at the wife's side for all the occasions of 18th-century sociability—in the carriage, on walks, at theater, banquets, and balls—and was regularly received in the home of the married women, with whom he would spend hours in private. This triangular configuration of the family core enjoyed full social legitimacy. The noblewomen's spiritual advisors and many a preacher warned that this intimacy between the dame and her *cicisbeo* had to respect certain limits, but it was well known that respect for such

⁹⁴ Indeed, confession had been placed at the service of the Inquisition as a tool for eradicating the Protestant movement in Italy; see Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin, 1996).

⁹⁵ Barbierato, *Politici e ateisti*, pp. 113–37.

⁹⁶ Spini, *Ricerca dei libertini*; Muir, *Culture Wars*.

limits was sometimes lacking.⁹⁷ Foreign visitors, particularly those from Protestant countries, have left us detailed descriptions, mainly amused, sometimes indignant, of this most particular social triangle.

5. *Repression?*

“In Venice they enjoy the utmost freedom of conscience”: with this assertion Jean Bodin opened his *Colloquium heptaplomeres* (1594). While other cities and regions are tormented by civil wars, oppressive tyrannies, cut-throat fiscalism, and inquisitorial persecution against scientific activities—reasons Bodin—this city is free from such burdens and servitude. Only Venice could thus provide a credible backdrop to the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*, in which seven interlocutors compare the seven religions or doctrines they profess: Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, skepticism, Judaism, Islam, and last a sort of naturalistic deism, which emerges from the discussion as a particularly credible religious position.⁹⁸ Setting his audacious colloquium in Venice, Bodin was attributing to the Republic a religious tolerance unequalled in 16th-century Europe and which would have remained unsurpassed during the following two centuries, during which time the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*—still in manuscript form at the author’s death—would search in vain for a publisher.⁹⁹

Bodin’s claim is difficult to reconcile with the existence of a tribunal like the Holy Office, which between 1541 and 1794 (the date of its abolition) investigated 3592 people (an approximate number based on the surviving documentation), initiated a significant number of trials against booksellers and publishers, and executed, sent to the galleys, and confined in prison cells many dozens of people—all for crimes of conscience or opinion.¹⁰⁰

Bodin’s judgment ought to be considered a fragment of a myth of Venice that already existed in Europe and which the *Signoria* consciously promoted. In reality, not one of the religious or philosophical options expressed in the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*—beyond, obviously, the official

⁹⁷ Roberto Bizzocchi, *Cicisbei. Morale privata e identità nazionale in Italia* (Rome/Bari, 2008).

⁹⁸ Jean Bodin, *Colloquium heptaplomeres, de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis*, ed. Ludwig Noack (Paris/London, 1857), p. 1.

⁹⁹ The *Colloquium heptaplomeres* is published in an anonymous French translation under the title *Colloque entre sept scavans qui sont de differens sentimens des secrets cachez des choses relevées*, ed. F. Berriot (Geneva, 1984).

¹⁰⁰ Federico Barbierato, “Venezia,” in Adriano Prosperi, ed., *Dizionario storico dell’Inquisizione*, vol. 4 (Pisa, 2011), pp. 1657–60.

one—could have been manifested in Venice without incurring punitive sanctions, even serious ones. But the Venetian Inquisition was not composed only of the three churchmen who voted in it (the nuncio, the patriarch, and the Inquisitor); beginning in 1547, three laymen (the *Tre savi all'eresia*) representing the interests of the Republic also took part in its proceedings, though only as observers and consultants. Through them, the *Signoria* ensured itself the possibility to intervene in the Inquisition's proceedings.¹⁰¹ If in the 16th century Protestant tendencies of any kind met with the harshest repression (the documentation of 28 heretics given over to the secular arm is surely incomplete), the Inquisition's position during the next two centuries was more moderate. Judging by the surviving papers of Venice's "court of the faith," the most pressing danger was Protestantism and all its ramifications. Witches, practitioners of magic, and libertines needed to be kept under control but did not constitute real threats. The three 18th-century cases of Inquisition-mandated executions that are known to us all refer to cases of the abuse of the sacraments: they were, in other words, indirect testaments to a faith in the supernatural efficacy of sacramental matter (particularly the consecrated Host). The last death sentence was pronounced in Venice in 1724.

Conclusion

The religious history of the Republic of Venice has two key aspects. The first of these is the institutional structure of the church in an *ancien régime* Italian state, with its geography of bishoprics and network of monasteries, as well as spontaneous centers of spiritual life. This panorama is marked by a central ecclesiastical authority (followed by the patriarch) endowed with a special authority and constantly held under supervision, and very often dominated by a political power reluctant to cede to Rome this instrument of control over its citizens. The political training that the Venetian ruling class gave to its own members explains the relatively high number of Venetian patricians who rose to the papal throne. At the same time, tensions with Rome gave a special visibility to the mystical currents that traverse the history of Venetian culture, particularly in the 15th century.

The second aspect of Venice's religious history consists of the discord, resistance, and rebellions against Rome that run through the history of

¹⁰¹ Andrea Del Col, *L'Inquisizione in Italia*, pp. 342–94.

the Republic in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is characterized by an antagonism of a religious nature between Venice and the city of the popes, whom the city on the lagoon opposed in the name of the authority of Christ, with the aspiration to expand the state of San Marco to much of the rest of Italy. This project came to an irreversible end with the defeat of 1509, from which Venice and its ruling class never recovered. This aspect is additionally characterized by the fact that Venice was the only Italian state in which the Protestant reform movement had a certain space for expansion and enjoyed, for a brief period, a certain tolerance on the part of the political powers. This expansion, which ended in the mid-16th century but which left traces over the succeeding two decades, explains the presence of the libertine ferment and free thinking that characterizes Venetian culture in the 17th century, but which disappeared almost completely in the following century.

CHARITY AND CONFRATERNITIES

David D'Andrea

For the Praise and Glory of Almighty God
and the Honor of this Exalted Republic.¹

The mythical tranquility of the Venetian state was predicated on a network of charitable institutions and lay religious brotherhoods that bound rich and poor together. Venice's system of charity reflected its unique political history. Governed by an aristocratically controlled republic imbued with a sense of divine mission, the Republic molded charitable practices that were common in other cities into distinctly Venetian institutions. Venetian nobles pursued welfare policies that would please God and secure the civic harmony of the well-ordered, Christian Republic, and the regulation of charitable activities was premised upon a basic principle: public manifestations of religious piety should serve the needs of the state.² Medieval confraternities developed according to this idea, and in the early modern period, a growing concern for public order and Catholic orthodoxy reaffirmed these underlying principles. New charitable initiatives might emerge, but no fundamental reorganization of these civic organizations would occur until the end of the Republic.

Glory and Honor: The Principles of Charity

The Venetian community, like other Italian states, considered divine favor to be a central reason for its peace and prosperity. The sacred and secular motivations behind public policy were indistinguishable in the articulation

¹ "Che ad laude et gloria dell'Omnipotente Dio et per honor di questa excelsa Repubblica . . ." Quotation from 1528 Venetian poor law found in Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1903), hereafter: Sanuto, *I Diarii*. Decree can be found in vol. 47, cols 81–83; quotation in col. 81.

² For a survey of medieval and early modern poverty, see Brian Tierney, *Medieval Poor Law: A Sketch of Canonical Theory and Its Application in England* (Berkeley, 1959); Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven, 1986); Bronislaw Geremek, *Poverty: A History*, trans. Agnieszka Kolakowska (Oxford, 1994); Brian Pullan, *Poverty and Charity: Europe, Italy, Venice, 1400–1700* (Aldershot, 1994); and James Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe* (Washington, D.C., 2009).

and operation of the Venetian state.³ Medieval political theory, mostly based on Thomist-Aristotelian thought, elaborated on this basic concept of charity, equating individual acts of charity to the meritorious works of the entire community. Just as the works of an individual could merit salvation, so the pious actions of a city-state could garner divine favor.⁴ A well-governed and charitable state could earn divine favor through its care of the poor. Charity gave glory to God, garnered God's grace, and produced civic harmony and brotherhood, the goal of any polity.

The relationship between God's glory and the exalted Republic was a common theme in Venetian political thought. A combination of medieval theology, political theory, and humanism produced the "myth" of Venetian political stability in which adherence to ritual and legend rendered the political order mystical and sanctified.⁵ Political theorists noted that a key to the stability and popular support for a republic governed by a closed nobility was the welfare system. Venetian charity must be understood within the larger context of Venetian political theory that correlated good government, charity, and virtue. The Venetian republican theory bound rulers and ruled in a system of service and sacrifice.

The nobles who guided the Venetian ship of state were steeped in medieval theology and humanist learning.⁶ In general, Venetian humanists were seriously pious, embracing Scripture, theological texts, lives of saints, and defenses of Catholic orthodoxy. As Margaret King explains, "The political life was not seen as a secular arena in which to unleash human energies striving for a secular perfection. It was seen as nurtured

³ Brian Pullan, "Poverty, Charity and the Reason of State: Some Venetian Examples," *Bollettino dell'Istituto di Storia della Società e dello Stato Veneziano* 2 (1960), 17–60; Christopher Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1989). For the most recent scholarship arguing against the artificial dichotomy between sacred and secular in premodern states, see Augustine Thompson, *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes, 1125–1325* (University Park, Pa., 2005).

⁴ On the relationship of charity to the common good in Italian communes, see John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Chicago, 1994), Ch. 1, pp. 13–30. For a discussion of Aquinas and medieval political thought as directly related to Venice, see Frederic Lane, "Medieval Political Ideas and the Venetian Constitution," in *Venice and History: The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane* (Baltimore, 1966), pp. 285–308.

⁵ For the myth of Venice, see Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981); James Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 58 (1986), 43–94; and Donald Queller, *The Venetian Patriarchate: Reality versus Myth* (Urbana, 1986).

⁶ On the topic of humanism and Christianity, see Charles Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (Chicago, 1970); and Margaret King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, 1986).

by the benevolence of God and the saints and serving a holy destiny.”⁷ The communal harmony of the Venetian Republic embodied virtue and excellence. Patriotism and piety were not opposing concepts.

An expression of the holy destiny of Venice and its noble leadership can be found in the works of the Venetian humanist Giovanni Caldiera (c.1400–c.1474).⁸ Caldiera wrote three philosophical treatises outlining a moral philosophy that reflected scholastic, Aristotelian, and humanist influences. Caldiera explained that virtuous men had merited entry into the Patriciate, and these men inherited the privilege and obligation to govern Venice virtuously. At the core of his discussion was the relationship between public service and the common good. Caldiera argued that the public life of a nobleman merited him honor. A magnanimous man exposed himself to labors and dangers for the benefit of the community. According to Caldiera’s theory of state, “The worthiness of the magnanimous man is most clearly seen in this, that he seems to require no rewards from other men, which he would not seek and earnestly entreat even if he were in genuine need, but he liberally and promptly succors these who he knows to be in need or poor.”⁹

Venetian nobles were called to work for God and the Republic, and the most obvious manifestation of virtuous action was the care of the poor. The love of God and neighbor should be extended to the Republic, and Venice’s charitable institutions reflected the charity and civility to be found in Venice. Venice taught citizens and foreigners alike to live virtuously. “Caldiera declares that the final cause of the city of Venice, the purpose for which it exists, is that Venice might excel throughout the earth and proffer its wisdom and assistance upon the whole globe. Her destiny is imperial.”¹⁰ If the Venetians proved themselves to be worthy before God and their fellow citizens, not only would they receive honors in this world but also the Republic would be immortal. As Quentin Skinner explains, “For it is claimed by all [humanist] writers to be one of the special merits of a Republican form of government that it enables men of highest *virtù* to pursue the goals of honour, glory and fame in the service of their community . . . The exhilarating prospect which is thus held out is

⁷ King, *Venetian Humanism*, p. 189.

⁸ The following discussion of Caldiera is based on Margaret King, “Personal, Domestic, and Republican Values in the Moral Philosophy of Giovanni Caldiera,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 28 (1975), 535–74.

⁹ King, “Caldiera,” p. 548.

¹⁰ King, “Caldiera,” p. 570.

that the life of a completely virtuous Republic might actually be without end."¹¹ As Jonathan Glixon has recently demonstrated for Venice, the religious brotherhoods of Venice repeatedly expressed their desire to honor God and the city through their actions.¹²

The destiny of Venice, however, was not an egalitarian Christian society; social disparity formed part of the natural order. The wealthy had a moral obligation to relieve the physical miseries of the poor, who in turn were obligated to pray for the souls of their benefactors. Ideally, this theological formula bound rich and poor together in a harmonious Christian state, where social justice and charity governed all. State policy aimed not to eradicate the causes of poverty (considered its own deterrent) but to alleviate the suffering of the deserving poor and enforce religious orthodoxy. Basic theological concepts of poverty and charity framed the Venetian noble understanding of how states merited divine favor. Venetian leaders implemented poor policies and regulated charitable organizations based on common Christian ideals but adapted them to address specific pragmatic goals of the Venetian state.

Confraternities (Scuole)

The most common expression of religious and civic devotion in Italian states was the confraternity, a voluntary lay association organized to provide charity for the living and the dead.¹³ In Venice these religious brotherhoods, called *scuole*, were divided into major and minor confraternities, or the *scuole grandi* and *piccole*, that operated according to a set of rules copied into a book called the *mariegola*. The *scuole grandi*, whose wealthier members provided charity to their poor brethren, were established in the wake of a penitential movement that swept Italy in 1260.¹⁴ As political

¹¹ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols, vol. 1: *The Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 180.

¹² Jonathan Glixon, *Honoring God and the City: Music at the Venetian Confraternities*, 1260–1807 (Oxford, 2003), pp. 3–9.

¹³ On the structure, organization, and political role of Italian confraternities, see Black, *Italian Confraternities*; Konrad Eisenbichler, "Italian Scholarship on Pre-Modern Confraternities in Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997), 567–80; Nicholas Terpstra, ed., *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order In Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 2000); and David D'Andrea, *Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy: The Hospital of Treviso, 1400–1530* (Rochester, N.Y., 2007), especially pp. 1–5.

¹⁴ On the Venetian *scuole grandi*, see Lia Sbriziolo, "Per la storia delle confraternite veneziane: dalle deliberazioni miste (1310–1476) del Consiglio dei Dieci. Le scuole dei battuti," in Michele Maccarrone, et al., eds., *Miscellanea Gilles Gerard Meersseman*, 2 vols

theorists and observers of Venice noted, one key to Venetian political stability was the *scuole grandi*, for not only did they provide for the poor but they also compensated for the frustrated political ambitions of the non-nobles. Although nobles could join the *scuole* and benefit from their religious works, the administrative offices of the *scuole* were reserved for the citizen class. Excluded from direct political power, citizens of Venice could find respected and important positions as officials in these powerful charitable institutions. The *scuole grandi* oversaw large endowments and served as public symbols of Venetian piety with their participation in civic processions and patronage of artists and architects.

As powerful players in Venetian civic life, the *scuole grandi* came to be closely regulated, and by the middle of the 1300s they fell under the jurisdiction of the Council of Ten, the governmental body responsible for state security. The statutes and membership lists of the *scuole grandi* had to be approved by the Ten, and their number was also closely regulated. The government distrusted outside influence and kept the number of flagellant confraternities (*dei Battuti*, as they were known) limited to four: San Giovanni Evangelista, Santa Maria della Carità, San Marco, and Santa Maria Valverde della Misericordia. An example of the strict regulation of religious brotherhoods was the suppression of the Bianchi Movement in 1399. A spontaneous religious reform movement, the Bianchi moved up the Italian peninsula calling for penance and healing, similar to the flagellant movement in 1260 that had inspired the foundation of the *scuole grandi*. The Council of Ten deemed the reformers as a threat to Venetian political stability and ordered the Bianchi expelled from Venetian territories.¹⁵ The Venetian government had a well-established system of religious brotherhoods, and innovations from outside the Republic were viewed with suspicion. The number of *scuole grandi*, however, did increase through the

(Padua, 1970) (= *Italia Sacra*, 15–16), 2:715–63; Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 33–193; Ruggero Maschio, “Le scuole grandi a Venezia,” in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 193–206; William Wurthmann, “The Council of Ten and the Scuole Grandi in Early Renaissance Venice,” *Studi veneziani* n.s. 18 (1989), 15–66; Patricia Fortini Brown, “Le Scuole,” in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 5 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 307–54; and Glixon, *Honoring God and the City*.

¹⁵ Daniel Bornstein, *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy* (Ithaca, 1993); and Bornstein, “Giovanni Dominici, the Bianchi, and Venice: Symbolic Action and Interpretive Grids,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (1993), 143–71.

centuries. The Scuola di San Rocco was added in 1480 and San Teodoro in 1552. A century later in 1687 the Scuola di San Fantin joined their ranks, and in the 18th century, the number of *scuole grandi* grew to nine with the elevation of the Scuola di Santa Maria del Rosario in 1765 and Santa Maria del Carmine in 1767. The Venetian leadership responded to the changing needs and devotions of the populace, but the changes would come slowly and through established brotherhoods.

The *scuole grandi* were perhaps the most public and powerful brotherhoods, but they certainly were not the most ubiquitous. The *scuole grandi* mainly cared for their own members, approximately five per cent of Venice's population. The rest of the population was served by hundreds of religious brotherhoods known as the *scuole piccole*.¹⁶ Based on existing *mariegole*, Francesca Ortalli examines 58 *scuole* active in the Middle Ages, yet there were certainly more than one hundred active at any time.¹⁷ One eye witness counted 119 devotional confraternities in 1521.¹⁸ A list of statutes compiled in the late 18th century listed 340 *scuole piccole*.¹⁹ The difficulty in determining the number of confraternities in any one period is the terminology used to describe them and their variable membership and activities. *Scuole piccole* were formed to meet the changing religious and material needs of craft guilds, parishes, foreign communities (such as Slavs, Greeks, and Florentines), specific illnesses (lame, blind), or worthy poor (such as prisoners).²⁰

Pulling their membership from a wide geographic, economic, and social range, the *scuole piccole* served to ease social tensions within the city. Their important civic function brought the *scuole piccole* under government supervision, subject to various bodies, including the Council of Ten

¹⁶ On the *scuole piccole*, see the works by Richard Mackenney: "Continuity and Change in the Scuole Piccole of Venice," *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994), 388–403; "Devotional Confraternities in Renaissance Venice," in W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, eds., *Voluntary Religion* (Oxford, 1986), *Studies in Church History*, vol. 23, pp. 85–96; "The *scuole piccole* of Venice: Formations and Transformations," in Nicholas Terpstra, ed., *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 172–89; and *Tradesmen and Traders: The World of the Guilds in Venice and Europe, c.1250–c.1650* (Totowa, N.J., 1987). See also Francesca Ortalli, *Per salute delle anime e delli corpi: Scuole piccole a Venezia nel tardo Medioevo* (Venice, 2001); Glixon, *Honoring God and the City*, pp. 195–249; and Gastone Vio, *Le scuole piccole nella Venezia dei dogi: Note d'archivio per la storia delle confraternite veneziane* (Vicenza, 2004).

¹⁷ Ortalli, *Per salute delle anime e delli corpi*.

¹⁸ Mackenney, "Devotional Confraternities," p. 86.

¹⁹ Mackenney, "Continuity and Change," p. 388.

²⁰ On the care of prisoners, see Chiara Traverso, *La scuola di San Fantin o dei "Picai": Carità e giustizia a Venezia* (Venice, 2000).

and the *Provveditori di Comun*. In examining these administrative records, however, Richard Mackenney found that Venetian oversight of the *scuole piccole* was remarkably lax. He argues that the inconsistent records and great variety of *scuole piccole* reflect a genuine popular devotion, thriving and declining with the fervor of individual members' devotional zeal. One should view the confraternities as "socially constructed rather than politically imposed."²¹ This is an important caveat when considering the *scuole, grandi* and *piccole*, of Venice. The *scuole*, with their fixed membership, regulated statutes, and charitable activities, constituted the stable religious and charitable associations that the Venetian government desired, but the creation of new confraternities and devotional associations demonstrates the vitality of a popular piety often autonomous from Venetian authorities.

Cheap Credit, the Monte di Pietà, and the Jews

The Venetian government encouraged the *scuole* to provide food, clothing, and shelter to those in need, but the poor also required consumer credit to survive normal economic cycles and extreme times of crisis. The Venetian debate about how best to provide for this system of cheap credit puts into dramatic relief the principles and process of Venetian charity. The *scuole* were not the only groups and the Bianchi not the only religious movement to be regulated. The Venetian state would also stifle a movement to provide cheap credit to the poor and would regulate another group, the Jews, to provide the same service.

Loaning money to the poor was fraught with theological complexity, centered on the problematic passage in Deuteronomy 23,²² yet the moral condemnations of money-lending did not eliminate the very real economic need of poor Christians for temporary credit. Communities regularly chartered pawnbrokers, often Jews.²³ The dependence on contracts with Jews to provide loans to Christians created an atmosphere of anti-Jewish

²¹ Mackenney, "Scuole piccole of Venice," p. 175.

²² Giacomo Todeschini, "Franciscan Economics and Jews in the Middle Ages: From a Theological to an Economic Lexicon," in Steven McMichael and Susan Myers, eds., *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 99–117.

²³ On money-lending, usury, and the status of Jews, see John T. Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957); Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1978); Robert Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Anthony Oldcorn (Berkeley, 1994); and Steven McMichael and Susan Myers, eds., *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden, 2004).

propaganda. Jews were accused of violating social charity and weakening the Christian community. In the middle of the 15th century, an Observant Franciscan movement sought to replace Jewish usurers with public nonprofit pawn banks, called Monti di Pietà. The Franciscans hoped that low-interest loans from Christian public institutions would eliminate the need for private Jewish moneylenders. After the first Monte di Pietà was established in Perugia in 1462, the institutions quickly spread throughout Italy.²⁴ The creation of Christian institutions that loaned money at interest, albeit not for profit, produced heated debate among theologians and communities. The Venetian debate provides a key insight into the administration of Venetian charity.

As the result of warfare on the Venetian mainland, in 1516 Jews were allowed to settle in Venice. Their presence in the city was tolerated for their service to the poor as moneylenders, yet they were carefully supervised and restricted in their movement.²⁵ When the issue arose as to whether the contract with the Jews should be renewed, a bitter debate erupted that lasted for months. Although all Venetian nobles considered the Jews a potential threat to the state, one faction considered them a necessary evil while the other considered them an intolerable affront to God. The two groups were united, however, in believing that only pious actions would merit divine favor and that unChristian actions would bring down divine wrath. The debate between the factions revolved around the central issue of religion and the poor.

The faction that wanted to expel the Jews from Venice focused on the divine rewards that would flow from this pious action, as it had to other states. Basing their arguments on canon and divine law, its adherents insisted that toleration of Jewish usury would bring ruin to Venice in the form of divine wrath. In June 1519 Antonio Balbi argued that it would be better to expel the Jews "from the whole world and God would make this Republic prosper. The King of Portugal expelled the Jews and was rewarded

²⁴ For the most recent overview, see Ariel Toaff, "Jews, Franciscans, and the First Monti di Pietà in Italy (1462–1500)," in McMichael and Myers, eds., *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages*, pp. 239–53.

²⁵ For Monti and Jews in Venice and the Veneto, see Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, pp. 429–509; Robert Finlay, "The Foundation of the Ghetto: Venice, the Jews, and the War of the League of Cambrai," *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* 126 (1982), 140–54; Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, "Venice between Jerusalem, Byzantium, and Divine Retribution: The Origins of the Ghetto," in Alisa Meyuhus Ginio, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492* (London, 1992), pp. 163–79; Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001); and Benjamin Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice, 1382–1797* (Aldershot, 2003).

with the route to India that made him King of Gold.”²⁶ In November 1519, Zacaria Dolfin warned that permitting the Jews to stay could incite divine wrath. “We should be wary of the wrath of God, for in France and Spain there are no Jews and God makes those monarchs prosper.”²⁷

Those who supported the renewal of a contract with the Jews cited the practical necessity of having a financial mechanism to provide money for the poor. Francesco Bragadin, after speaking out against the Jews, argued that nevertheless “the Jews are necessary for the sake of the poor, since there is no Monte di Pietà here as there is in other cities.”²⁸ Although not a participant in the debate, Marino Sanuto (Marin Sanudo) added his comments that reflect the devout and learned, yet practical and commonsense approach of the Venetian nobility, looking to past precedent for guidance. “A city needs plenty of Jews and bakers, especially ours, for the common good, drawing upon laws and deeds that our ancestors had done and citing the opinions of the Doctors Alessandro de Imola, Pietro de Ancorano, Baldus and others . . . nor should the state entertain the nonsense of chasing the Jews out when there is no Monte di Pietà.”²⁹ Sanuto’s more pragmatic approach was shared by the majority of his fellow nobles, and the opposition to a contract with the Jews was narrowly defeated.

The debate over the Jews and the Monte di Pietà is very informative regarding Venetian attitudes toward the poor and how the nobility made important policy decisions. First, the Venetian nobles debated and implemented policies with the objective of meriting divine favor, or at least avoiding divine wrath. Second, the evidence and sources used to support arguments reveals a thoroughly religious discourse. Venetian senators cited Scripture, Church law, the saints, and the most recent clerical initiative (Monte di Pietà) to argue their positions. Theological treatises, not statistical analysis, framed the debate. Finally, the debate reveals that the nobles not only knew canon law but also questioned the prerogatives of the papacy and clergy. Franciscans warned of divine wrath against those who tolerated Jewish moneylenders, but the government allowed the reason of state to override religious passions. The Venetian nobility guided public policy away from the anti-Semitic preaching and dampened

²⁶ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 27, col. 359. Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, p. 489.

²⁷ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 28, cols 61–62. Translations of various portions of Sanuto’s text can also be found in Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 39–42; and Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, pp. 493–95.

²⁸ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 28, col. 62. Quoted in Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, p. 489.

²⁹ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 28, col. 63; Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, p. 495.

the religious zeal of preachers. Venetian authorities would decide which religious practices and clerical initiatives were in the best interest of the Venetian state. The rise and fall of nations depended on divine favor, and Venetian nobles would not entrust the fate of their dominion to ecclesiastical decrees.

What was best for the poor themselves? The debate reflects a genuine concern for the health of the state, but there was no suggestion that the state should care for the poor directly. Once again, the Venetian government established the general welfare policies but was reluctant to create a centralized bureaucracy. Like the Venetian *scuole*, the Jews served the Venetian state, loaning their capital to Venetian poor at established rates.

Hospitals and Poor Laws

Venice also did not adopt another movement that was sweeping Italy in the 15th century: the consolidation of medieval hospitals.³⁰ Despite the trend of Renaissance states to construct large public hospitals, the Venetian distrust of concentrated resources and power fostered a system of decentralized autonomous hospitals and shelters.³¹ As a result, dozens of small hospitals and hospices scattered throughout the city served the sick and poor of Venice. These institutions, often established by a devout patron and governed by confraternities, performed a wide variety of services for diverse categories of poor and sick.³² Pullan lists more than fifty hospitals established before the 16th century that cared for a variety of poor (such as pilgrims, orphans, ex-servicemen, and women) and were administered by various organizations, including the Procuratori of San Marco, guilds, the *scuole grandi*, and foreign communities.³³

³⁰ For the most recent overview, see Francesco Bianchi and Marek Słoiński, "Le riforme ospedaliere del Quattrocento in Italia e nell'Europa Centrale," *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa* 69 (2006), 7–45.

³¹ In *Gli "Ospizi" di Venezia* (Venice, 1983), Franca Semi inventories more than 130 hospitals and hospices.

³² On the Venetian charitable network, see Pullan, *Rich and Poor*; Giovanni Scarabello, "Strutture assistenziali a Venezia nella prima metà del '500 e avvisi europei della riforma dell'assistenza," in Manfredo Tafuri, ed., *"Renovatio Urbis": Venezia nell'età di Andrea Gritti (1523–38)* (Rome, 1984), pp. 119–33; Dennis Romano, "L'assistenza e la beneficenza" in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 5: *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 55–406; and Bernard Aikema and Dulcia Meijers, *Nel regno dei poveri. Arte e storia dei grandi ospedali veneziani in età moderna, 1474–1797* (Venice, 1989).

³³ Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, pp. 423–28.

The Venetian government preferred to rely on individual piety in a decentralized system, but public funds were sometimes allocated to support special initiatives. The preambles to these governmental decrees provide critical insights into the formulation of public policy, for the justification of expenditures summarized the sentiments of the ruling elite. One example was the Hospital of Gesù Cristo at Sant'Antonio. Initially proposed in 1476 to care for refugees fleeing the wars in Dalmatia, the modest hospital (housing 25–30 paupers) was not completed until 1503.³⁴ Granting financial support on 12 March 1503 to complete the project, the Great Council explained why public funds should be used to support charitable endeavors.

The chief and most salutary means of obtaining divine favour for a state and republic, just as for private persons, is the maintenance of the poor, in whom the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ is represented; and hence the chief ornament of every most noble city is, and always has been, some excellent hospital for feeding the poor. Proceeding on these lines, our good and pious ancestors gave a notable beginning to the hospital at Sant'Antonio, which has now been completed, and where many paupers could be lodged if the means for their support were forthcoming.³⁵

The decree reiterated that the primary motivation to care for the poor was to obtain divine favor. The poor represented Christ on earth, yet assistance was still not indiscriminately provided. The decree stipulated that “because it is convenient to deliberate and declare what type of poor are to be placed and maintained in the hospital . . . it is declared that in this hospital be housed only Venetian poor or sailors or other deserving poor that have earned the gratitude of our state.”³⁶ The poor might represent Christ, but charity in this public hospital had to be earned through useful service to the state. Divine favor could be merited through care of the poor, but those receiving public aid were required to have performed some service to the common good.

The decree recognized hospitals as ornaments to noble cities, and the hospital of Gesù Cristo di Sant'Antonio did attract the attention of other Christian states. In July 1487 Pope Innocent VIII issued a decree granting

³⁴ Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, pp. 212–14. For a newly discovered printed copy of the papal bull (1475) granting indulgences in support of the hospital, see Daniela Fattori, “Incunaboli sconosciuti e incunaboli semisconosciuti all'Archivio di Stato di Venezia,” *La Bibliofilia* 102 (2000), 253–57.

³⁵ The entire document is recorded in Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 4, cols 810–12. The introduction to the decree is translated in Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, p. 214.

³⁶ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 4, col. 812.

an indulgence for those who offered assistance in the building of the hospital and care of the poor. Citing the devotional fervor of the Venetian nobility, the pope encouraged support to the hospital for its pious and charitable works.³⁷ An anonymous French treatise (c.1500) on Venetian government described the ample provisions for the poor provided by the hospitals in Venice. The author also noted the new construction of the hospital of Gesù Cristo di Sant'Antonio, which would be the most beautiful in Italy.³⁸ In this treatise of government, the French author not only observed the Venetian welfare policy for children, the sick, and the poor but also compared these efforts to those in effect elsewhere in Italy. To political observers and visitors, keenly aware of how states managed poverty, the hospital of Gesù Cristo epitomized the Venetian concern for divine favor and the glory of the republic.

Some observers, however, pointed out the inadequacy of the Venetian system in comparison to other states. In 1497 Duke Lodovico Sforza of Milan asked the Milanese ambassador to Venice, Battista Sfondrato, for a report on the charitable and religious institutions in Venice. The mandate to Sfondrato specifically requested a list of the charitable institutions comparable to the hospitals and confraternities established in Milan. Sfondrato began his report with the comment that Venice lacked a large, central hospital like the one in Milan. Although the construction of a public hospital (Gesù Cristo at Sant'Antonio) had begun, several small neighborhood hospitals cared for the sick. The most significant charitable institutions were the *scuole grandi*, wealthy brotherhoods that cared for their sick members. In addition to the large brotherhoods were the smaller brotherhoods, mutual aid societies organized by parish, guild, or foreign communities. Although a multitude of various charitable organizations provided for the needs of the city, Ambassador Sfondrato concluded that the many hospitals were insufficient to provide for all of the city's poor.³⁹

³⁷ The letter issued (22 July 1487) by Pope Innocent VIII in favor of the hospital of Gesù Cristo di Sant'Antonio can be found in David Chambers and Brian Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Toronto, 2001), pp. 307-08.

³⁸ Extract from *Description ou traictié du gouvernement ou régime de la cité et seigneurie de Venise* in Chambers and Pullan, *Venice*, pp. 302-03.

³⁹ For an introduction to the document and the full text in the original language, see Reinhold Mueller, "A Foreigner's View of Poor Relief in Late Quattrocento Venice," in Maurice Aymard, ed., *Pauvres et riches, Société et culture du Moyen Age aux temps modernes, Mélanges offerts à B. Geremek* (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 55-63. A full English translation by Mueller can be found in Chambers and Pullan, *Venice*, pp. 299-302.

The sacred trust established between devout citizens and charitable institutions was not something the Venetian leadership ignored or took lightly. One of the responsibilities of the Procuratori di San Marco, composed of the most esteemed nobles of Venice, was the oversight of charitable endowments.⁴⁰ This spirit of oversight and duty inspired the formation of two special commissions (1489 and 1526) to examine hospital practices. The preamble to the 1489 report, which would be repeated again verbatim in 1526, gave an internal assessment of charitable institutions and their importance to the Venetian state.

Our pious ancestors have built and bequeathed hospitals in substantial numbers in this our city, which, as is well known, are constituted in various different ways and excellently endowed. But the greater part of them are in a poor condition and even decayed, which is an offence to God and to the honour of our State, on account of the complaints of the poor who are not receiving their dues as they ought, or in accordance with the bequests and instructions of testators. God does not ignore these laments, for it is written: "I am not indifferent to the cries of the poor."⁴¹

Three senators and a notary were to inspect the hospitals of Venice and ensure that the last wishes of the testators were being implemented. The nobles took action based on the belief that God would hear the cries of the poor and weak, for (as the statute stated) the poor did not petition Venetian authorities for redress of their ills but appealed directly to the Almighty.

The hospital reforms are important also for what they do not mention. The reforms did not call for a study of the efficacy of relief; rather, the primary concern was the sacred trust of the testator. Venetian authorities desired to fulfill their commitment regarding the pious bequests and not provoke divine wrath for their negligence. Venetian authorities had to answer to God, the living (poor), and the dead (testators). The responsibility of the Venetian government was not to eradicate the causes of poverty but to ensure that the religious obligation of donor and recipient was fulfilled. They regulated but did not directly subsidize poor relief. This was not an indication of indifference to the poor, however, because the government did closely supervise these institutions. The government

⁴⁰ Mueller, Reinhold, *The Procuratori di San Marco and the Venetian Credit Market* (New York, 1977).

⁴¹ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 42, cols 257–60, quotation in col. 258. Portions of the decree are translated by Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, p. 211. The initial decree was promulgated 29 June 1489 and renewed on 28 July 1526. Latin phrase inspired by Psalm 9:13.

outlined the public policies and relied upon private charitable actions of citizens to perform the work.

The lack of government coordination reflects a Venetian reluctance to centralize power, yet the challenges of disease and famine would soon necessitate the creation of government agencies to oversee institutions. Recurrences of the plague led to the creation of a permanent Board of Health, the *Provveditori alla Sanità*, in 1489. The *ad hoc* hospital inquiries of 1489 and 1526, however, were only intermediate steps to permanent institutions. It would require devastating famines, unprecedented numbers of beggars, and a new evangelical zeal of the 16th century to inspire more sweeping legislation against the poor in 1528–29 and the creation in 1565 of a permanent body, the *Provveditori sopra gli Ospedali e Luoghi Pii*, to oversee charitable institutions.

The weakness of a decentralized system became apparent during the first decades of the 16th century, a pivotal period in the history of poverty and welfare legislation in both Venice and the rest of Europe. During this period when communities throughout Europe increasingly regulated beggars and coordinated poor relief, Venetian nobles also articulated their first comprehensive poor laws. Famine and disease struck Venetian territories from 1527–29, and Venetian authorities responded with sweeping legislation designed to eliminate begging and preserve the social order.⁴² The decrees of 1528 and 1529 were the dramatic culmination and articulation of Venetian political theory influenced by religious principles. The poor laws and the Venetian response during these years of crisis combined public enforcement of established Catholic theological principles with the private devotion of Venetian citizens.

Drought, floods, and bad harvests in 1527 forced people from the countryside into the cities, from regional centers to Venice in a desperate search for food. After months of starvation with the city flooded with refugees from the mainland, it finally became evident that voluntary almsgiving could not meet the needs of the poor; therefore the Venetian Senate took direct action. On 13 March 1528 the government issued the first of two decrees designed to alleviate the suffering and intolerable conditions in the city.⁴³ Temporary wooden shelters were constructed, begging outlawed, and paupers denied entry to the city. By the following June, the foreign poor were to be expelled from the temporary hospitals and sent

⁴² For a discussion of the laws, see Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, pp. 239–79.

⁴³ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 47, cols 81–84.

to the mainland. Those who returned would be flogged, and the boatmen who transported them would also be punished.

The measures were provisional, only in effect until the following year's harvest, and they clearly stated that the temporary hospitals would not compete with the established parish-based alms distribution. Nevertheless, the decree marked an important shift in public response to the crisis: the poor had become the community's responsibility, cared for and financed through public taxation. As the preamble to the ordinance stated, "there is no work that one can do in this world that is more pleasing to Our Lord God than to take care and responsibility of providing for his miserable creatures." Famine, disease, and the general confusion in the city motivated the Venetian government to act "for the praise and glory of Almighty God and the honor of this Exalted Republic."⁴⁴

The 1528 decree marked the Venetian government's first attempt to eliminate begging and mandated a communal tax to raise funds for the public relief. Given the exceptional nature of the decree, Venetian nobles justified the new policies with reference to the famine and threat of disease and also the city's reputation. The public begging and aggressive solicitations for alms in the streets brought "great ignominy to this city, which is a scandalous thing and a bad example."⁴⁵ The emergency legislation of 1528 was reissued a year later with a more concise objective and stricter mechanisms of enforcement. The second decree of 3 April 1529 clearly articulated the well-established Catholic theology of welfare.

Charity is, without any doubt, to be considered the most important form of good work, and it must always be practiced towards our neighbors. As is everyone's duty, we must look to the interests of the poor and the health of the sick and offer food to the hungry; and never should we fail to extend our aid and favor to those who can earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. These things we must do in order to please our supreme and almighty God, who will bring to perfection every well-conceived and well-intentioned undertaking; in order to root out a wicked custom and an evil way of life, in the form of begging and cheating, to which so many people resort in this noble city, bringing some notoriety to Venice; and in order to enhance the good name of this well-ordered Republic. We must neglect no method of promoting such an important enterprise.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 47, col. 81.

⁴⁵ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 47, col. 81.

⁴⁶ The Venetian Senate decree of 3 April 1529 is translated in Chambers and Pullan, *Venice*, pp. 303–06, quotation pp. 303–04.

The decree reflected the clear distinction between the deserving and unworthy poor that had been established in canon law for centuries. The practical implementation of these principles repeated some of the previous year's measures and concentrated poor relief in the parishes. All non-Venetian beggars were expelled to the territories whence they came. Impotent poor who could not perform manual labor would be provided for in their homes or in public shelters. Able-bodied poor and professional beggars would be put to work on ships or taught a craft. The clergy should support the poor in their parishes, utilizing the power of the pulpit to remind citizens of their obligations to the poor and establishing collection boxes in the churches. The plan did not call for a centralization of services in a Common Chest or special commission. The regulations aimed to supplement not supplant the work performed by the parochial system, hospitals, and religious brotherhoods. Venetian legislators separated the worthy from the unworthy poor according to citizenship and physical well-being. Like those in other European states, Venetian authorities responded to changing economic conditions by enforcing principles of canon law.⁴⁷

The New Philanthropy

The poor law of 1529 marks a significant development in Venetian poor policy. Bronislaw Geremek argues that "Attitudes towards the poor . . . had changed radically during the crisis of 1527–29, so that it became possible, without in any way deforming the traditional doctrine of Christian charity, with its emphasis on voluntary and spontaneous acts of compassion, to implement a series of repressive measures aimed at the poor."⁴⁸ How can attitudes radically change and simultaneously maintain tradition? The answer lies in the goal and tradition of Venetian charity: the common good of the Most Serene Republic. As Geremek states, harsh laws against the poor were in theory to be balanced by voluntary acts of mercy, especially on the part of the nobles and their service to the poor. In the midst of the chaos of famine and disease, nobles did indeed rise to the challenge, caring for the sick and simultaneously defending the physical and spiritual health of the Republic. The tragic circumstances brought

⁴⁷ Tierney, *Poor Law*, pp. 128–30.

⁴⁸ Geremek, *Poverty: A History*, p. 136.

greater attention to those on the margins of society: beggars, prostitutes, and others in need of redemptive charity.⁴⁹

The economic, political, and religious crises that shook 16th-century Europe brought about fundamental changes in European poverty and welfare. Calls for moral renewal coupled with difficult economic circumstances meant increased surveillance of the poor, a crackdown on begging, and the creation of new charitable institutions that served spiritual as well as the physical needs.⁵⁰ We witness all of these developments in Venice, where new institutions for beggars and the permanently ill were established. For example, the temporary hospital erected near San Giovanni and Paolo in 1528 became a permanent hospital for the destitute, known as the Derelitti, which housed the sick, orphans, and widows. When another famine struck Venice in 1590, the result was the creation of the poor hospital of San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti, founded in 1591 to house beggars. Instead of consigning the poor to the abandoned leper hospital on the island of San Lazzaro, the government moved the institution to land near the Dominican church of San Giovanni and Paolo and the hospital of the Derelitti. The large complex encompassing the Dominican monastery, the Derelitti, and the Mendicanti would be transformed in the 19th century into the civic hospital, a role it still serves today.

Always wary of outside influences, Venice nevertheless participated in the reforming spirit that swept Christendom in the 16th century and left a number of new brotherhoods and charities in its wake.⁵¹ One of these brotherhoods, the Oratory of Divine Love, characterized the reforming and charitable zeal of the new lay and clerical orders. The Oratorians' charitable activity focused on syphilitic patients and the establishment of hospitals for these "incurables." Gaetano da Thiene (1480–1547) brought this society from Rome to Venice and established the Hospital of the

⁴⁹ On the concept of the new philanthropy, see Brian Pullan, "La nuova filantropia," in Aikema and Meijers, *Nel regno dei poveri*, pp. 19–34.

⁵⁰ Beat Kümin, ed., *Reformations Old and New: Essays on the Socio-Economic Impact of Religious Change, c. 1470–1630* (Aldershot, 1996); Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994); O. P. Grell and A. Cunningham, eds., *Health Care and Poor Relief in Protestant Europe, 1500–1700* (London, 1997); Grell and Cunningham, eds., *Health Care and Poor Relief in Counter-Reformation Europe* (London, 1999); and Thomas Max Safley, ed., *The Reformation of Charity: The Secular and the Religious in Early Modern Poor Relief* (Boston, 2003).

⁵¹ John Olin, ed., *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola* (New York, 1969); John Donnelly, "The New Religious Orders, 1517–1648," in Thomas Brady, Heiko Oberman, and James Tracy, eds., *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600. Vol. II: Visions, Programs, and Outcomes* (Leiden, 1995), pp. 283–315.

Incurables (Incurabili) in 1522.⁵² Fleeing the sack of Rome in 1527, Gian Pietro Carafa (1476–1559) was welcomed by the administrators of Venice's Incurabili, and Carafa alongside Thiene provided for the spiritual and physical needs of the inmates.

The Incurabili quickly earned the support of some of the leading men and women of Venice, who participated in literal and symbolic service to the most needy in the Venetian Republic. For example, in March 1524 Sanuto recorded that many were moved to devotion as they witnessed Venetian nobles who with great humility washed the feet of the sick poor.⁵³ There could hardly be a more poignant example fusing Venetian theology and practice than Venetian policy-makers washing the feet of syphilitics. The call to meritorious conduct that informed political theory and introduced Venetian charitable legislation was not mere rhetoric. Venetian service to the poor in the Incurabili was based in Christian principles and the concept of meritorious works to win divine favor and secular praise for the republic.

One of the men inspired by the dedication and service of his fellow nobles was Girolamo Miani (1486–1537), who embodied noble service to the Republic and the new charitable impulses of the 16th century.⁵⁴ During the famine years of 1527–29 Miani emerged as one of the most dedicated servants in the new hospitals.⁵⁵ In a few years Miani would not only become a leader in the Incurabili but also establish a new religious order, the Somaschans, dedicated to the education and care of children. Miani's holiness and selfless service would ultimately lead to his canonization in 1767. His actions provide a concrete example of Venetian theology and practice fusing together. During times of crisis and change, new initiatives were employed to sustain the Republic. The hospitals and pious places of Venice acted as mediators to merit divine favor and praise from the world. The Venetian reputation for good works may have worked, for during the years of crisis between 1527–29, three leading figures of the Catholic

⁵² Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, 231–38; Aikema and Meijers, *Nel regno dei poveri*, pp. 131–48; Andrea Nordio, "L'Ospedale degli Incurabili nell'assistenza veneziana del '500," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 32 (1996), 165–84. On the treatment of syphilis, see Laura McGough, "Quarantining Beauty: The French Disease in Early Modern Venice," in Kevin Siena, ed., *Sins of the Flesh: Responding to Sexual Disease in Early Modern Europe* (Toronto, 2005), pp. 211–38.

⁵³ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 36, cols 102–03.

⁵⁴ On Miani, see Guiseppe Della Santa, "Per la biografia di un benefattore dell'umanità nel '500 (S. Girolamo Miani)," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* (1917), 33–54; and Carlo Pellegrini, ed. *San Girolamo Miani e Venezia: Nel V centenario della nascita* (Venice, 1986).

⁵⁵ Sanuto, *I Diarii*, vol. 47, col. 178.

Reformation—Gaetano da Thiene, Gian Pietro Carafa (later Pope Paul IV, r. 1555–59), and Girolamo Miani—were all serving the poor in Venetian hospitals. As the Venetian leadership had hoped, Venice had become a refuge and example of Christian piety, evidence of the glory and honor earned through good works.

Venetian leaders might have desired to project an image of Christian morality, but in the early modern period Venice also developed a reputation as a center of prostitution.⁵⁶ Several charitable institutions were created to respond to this very public vice. The Convertite for reformed prostitutes was established in the 1540s. The Casa delle Zitelle was founded in 1550 to save young women from falling into prostitution. In 1577 the Casa del Soccorso was established for prostitutes and adulteresses. Of the few charitable institutions established after 1600, one was the hospital of the Penitenti, founded in 1703 to care for repentant prostitutes. As Joanne Ferraro has recently argued, evangelical zeal was not the only motivating factor behind these initiatives. “The widespread movement to enclose women signified something besides offering ‘asylum.’ It signaled a change in the attitudes of the governing elites who wrote laws, rendered justice, and donated funds to pay for foundling homes and convents for repentant prostitutes. Authorities feared disease and family disorder. They also feared threats to the inheritance system of entail and primogeniture.”⁵⁷ The maintenance of gender roles, with institutional disparity in enforcement and condemnation, also played a critical role in early modern Venetian charity.

The lack of major charitable initiatives in the last two centuries of the Venetian Republic is a reflection of a government content with its existing institutions. New confraternities or institutions that were approved in the last two centuries of the Republic represented efforts to preserve the political and religious status quo, targeting specific groups considered worthy of Christian charity. The strict regulation of begging and the growing number of institutions related to prostitution were in effect efforts to shore up the political and social order. The expansion of the church

⁵⁶ See M. V. Constable, *Le Cortigiane di Venezia dal Trecento al Settecento: Catalogo della mostra. Venezia, Casinò Municipale Ca' Vendramin Calergi, 2 Febbraio–16 Aprile 1990* (Milan, 1990); and Guiliana Marcolini and Giulio Marcon, “Prostituzione e assistenza a Venezia nel secolo XVIII: Il pio loco delle povere peccatrici penitenti di San Iob,” *Studi veneziani* 10 (1985), 99–136.

⁵⁷ Ferraro, Joanne, *Nefarious Crimes, Contested Justice: Illicit Sex and Infanticide in the Republic of Venice, 1557–1789* (Baltimore, 2008), p. 201.

and hospital of the Catecumeni, organized to support Jews, Muslims, and Protestants in their conversion to Catholicism, indicates the support of orthodox religious doctrine.⁵⁸ Another form of public charity to maintain the social order was the creation of the Accademia dei Nobili, begun in the 1620s to assist poor noble families in their education and training to serve the state.⁵⁹ By the 17th century, the Venetian nobility were focused on maintaining their political and religious hegemony, not experimenting with new welfare policies.

Even with the clear political and economic decline of Venice and calls to reform the centuries-old charitable institutions and confraternities, major initiatives in the 17th and 18th centuries failed. Until the fall of the Republic in 1797 Venice relied upon the institutions created in the late 15th and early 16th centuries: the *scuole grandi* and *piccole*, the hospitals, parochial confraternities for the poor, and the specialized institutions, namely the hospices for ex-prostitutes (Zitelle, Soccorso, Convertite, and Penitenti), the confraternity of the Santissimo Crocifisso di S. Bartolomeo for poor prisoners, the Catecumeni, the Accademia dei Nobili, and the national confraternities.⁶⁰ No radical reorganization would occur until Venice became part of the Kingdom of Italy in 1805. It was only in the first decades of the 19th century that the welfare reforms that had been implemented across Enlightenment Europe finally came to Venice.⁶¹ In 1806 and 1807, all confraternities and charitable institutions were abolished.⁶² The last vestige of the Venetian confraternities were the parochial confraternities of the Santissimo Sacramento. Centuries of semi-autonomous confraternal activities and charitable associations were replaced by public welfare, and most of the great cultural patrimonies of the *scuole* were sold, abandoned, or demolished.

⁵⁸ Aikema and Meijers, *Nel regno dei poveri*, pp. 215–23.

⁵⁹ Zenoni, Luigi, *Per la storia della cultura in Venezia dal 1500 al 1797. L'Accademia dei Nobili alla Giudecca (1619–1797)*, miscellanea di storia veneta, Serie 3, vol. 9 (Venice, 1916).

⁶⁰ Paolo Preto, “Le riforme,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8 (1998): *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Piero Del Negro and Paolo Preto, p. 130.

⁶¹ Giovanni Scarabello, “La municipalità democratica,” in Benzoni and Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8: *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Del Negro and Preto, especially pp. 320, 354 n. 93–94.

⁶² Filiberto Agostini, *La riforma napoleonica della Chiesa nella repubblica e nel Regno d'Italia 1802–14* (Vicenza, 1990).

Conclusion

In an overview of confraternities and the public order in early modern Italy, Nicholas Terpstra states: "A review of the modes of civic welfare operating in early modern Italy demonstrates that civic systems woven together out of a range of semi-independent institutions like confraternities, *ospedali*, *monti di pietà*, and the like were relatively cheap, flexible, easily coordinated, and open to expansion."⁶³ Civic leaders throughout Italy facilitated or impeded charitable institutions, practices, and innovations based on local needs and political objectives. In Venice the aristocratic leadership crafted a uniquely Venetian mode of civic welfare from the range of charitable options. A complex network of hundreds of lay institutions, parochial associations, hospitals, and fraternal organizations provided the social network that underlay the political stability of Venice, which for centuries never experienced a popular uprising or revolt. Although no central authority organized the individual initiatives and activities, the Venetian government did closely supervise, certify, and regulate charity and confraternities, for their proper functioning were considered critical matters of state. Notwithstanding the diverse goals, dates of foundation, membership, and activities, all of these organizations gave physical or spiritual comfort to those in need and served the common good. Some brotherhoods survived for centuries; others were established toward the end of the Republic; yet other charitable initiatives were thwarted by authorities. Despite the changing historical circumstances, a consistent principle, captured in the preamble to the 1528 poor law, guided governmental oversight. The goal was not to eliminate poverty but to mitigate suffering as a divine mandate and good public policy. Venetians knew that the poor would always be among them and responded with stable, orthodox, yet malleable charitable organizations that were the foundation of the Venetian Republic.

Note on Research and Sources

The groundbreaking study by Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor* (1971), inspired a generation of scholars to explore the religious and civic life of Venetian

⁶³ Nicholas Terpstra, "Confraternities and Public Charity," in John Donnelly and Michael Maher, eds., *Confraternities and Catholic Reform* (Kirkville, Mo., 1999), p. 120.

charitable organizations.⁶⁴ More recent scholarship has shifted the primary focus from the *scuole grandi* to the *scuole piccole* and the relationship between confraternities and cultural patronage. There still remains much work to be done in all aspects of charity and confraternities after 1600. We know relatively little about the roles of the *scuole piccole* and of women, the activities of the national brotherhoods, and the relationship between Venice and charities throughout the Veneto. Forty years after Pullan's groundbreaking study, we still lack a general survey of poverty in early modern Venice.

The state of the scholarship reflects the sources available to scholars. Most of the records of the *scuole grandi* and *piccole* were dispersed, destroyed, or lost in the 19th century. Although there is no comprehensive survey of early modern Venetian charitable and confraternal associations, there are several places where one can turn for critical guides for research. The most complete description of the hospital archives can be found in the catalogue of the state archive of Venice (ASVe), *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato, Venezia*, IV: "Opere pie, istituzioni di assistenza e beneficenza, ospedali" (Rome, 1994), pp. 1080–1101; and the collections of the Istituzioni di Ricovero e di Educazione (IRE) catalogued by Giuseppe Ellero, *L'archivio IRE* (Venice, 1987). The majority of documents related to charity and confraternities can be found in the ASVe and IRE, but the work by Gastone Vio provides an invaluable list of the 925 devotional confraternities whose records can be found scattered throughout the public, parochial, and private archives of Venice.

There have been a number of efforts to inventory the architectural and artistic patrimony of the confraternities, and as a result there are a number of finding aids to locate existing structures and artwork. Silvia Gramigna's *Scuole* provides a map with the location of eighty scuole buildings. Raymond Lifchez's "A Digital Archive" contains 1000 images of 139 sites related to charity and confraternities. One can consult the web page www.mip.berkeley.edu/spiro/ and search "Lifchez Gift" for Venice and/or subject "scuole." Jonathan Glixon, *Honoring God*, Appendix 2: "A Calendar of Religious Occasions Celebrated by the Scuole," lists the activities of various confraternities throughout the year. Richard Mackenney, *Tradesmen*, Appendix I: "The Sestieri of Venice: Churches, Scuole, Altars c.1250–c.1650," lists 128 churches, altars, and buildings associated with confraternities. Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, Appendix to Part II: "Venetian Hospitals

⁶⁴ See Bibliography for publication details of works cited here.

of Medieval Origin," provides a list of fifty-two institutions founded before 1500. Franca Semi's work contains 132 entries for hospitals and hospices. An indication of the continuing effort to study the cultural legacy of the scuole is the inauguration of a new journal, *Quaderni delle Scuole di Venezia* (2008–).

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VENICE AND ITS MINORITIES

Benjamin Ravid

I

Before dealing with specific minorities in Venice, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by a minority. As a broad working definition for this essay, I would suggest that it consists of those immigrants into Venice and their descendants who continued to maintain aspects of their non-Venetian identity as a identifiable group, primarily by retaining the religious rites or aspects of the culture of their place of origin. While all members of minority groups in Venice were immigrants or descendants of immigrants, conversely, not all immigrants or descendants of immigrants remained members of a minority group.

Many factors combined to attract to Venice not only foreign visitors and temporary residents who came for numerous different reasons and stayed for varying lengths of time but also immigrants, thereby making the city one of the most populous in Europe. Most basically, helping to account for the large size of the population of Venice were immigrants from the Venetian holdings on the Italian mainland and from its overseas possessions in the East, which the Ottoman Empire was gradually conquering, who were naturally attracted to the capital city of Venice because of the very wide range of possibilities that it offered. Factors that made Venice attractive not only to these Venetian subjects but also to individuals residing beyond the boundaries of the Venetian state included the position of Venice as Europe's leading emporium that attracted merchants with goods to sell from all over the known world and purchasers eager to acquire them; the role of Venice as the major link between West and East; the general opportunities offered by Venice as a port city; the industrial and manufacturing activities of Venice, whose decline has been somewhat exaggerated in the past; and the numerous cultural opportunities and advantages that the city provided in many spheres, including art, music, theater and the possibility of publishing books in various languages and typefaces. Finally, many poor and indigent individuals without any skills came to Venice to seek to improve their lot in the large capital city. Philippe de Commynes, the envoy of the French king Charles VIII,

observed in 1495 that “most of their people are foreigners,” a statement that while exaggerated, nevertheless represented the impression made by Venice upon non-Venetians who came to the city.¹ Furthermore, after major plagues, especially the Black Death of 1348–49 and the two subsequent plagues of 1577 and 1630–31, in which 26.5 and 32.1 per cent of the population respectively died,² the Venetian government embarked upon a policy of attracting immigrants, especially artisans and workers, to repopulate the city and to enable it to continue to function, on occasion offering significant concessions.³ Indeed, at all times it was always ready to welcome those who could benefit its economy by bringing merchandise to Venice for sale, by making purchases in the city, or especially by introducing the manufacture of new goods or improved techniques of manufacturing of existing products.

Next, it is necessary to determine who was considered a Venetian and to clarify whether foreign immigrants could shed their status of being foreigners by becoming Venetians, and if so, how. At the end of the 13th century and during the early part of the 14th, by the process known as the *serrata* (closing or locking) of the Great Council, the ranks of the nobility were closed and eventually recorded in the *Libro d'oro* (Golden Book), with new families subsequently admitted in return for large financial payments, primarily at two great times of crisis. The nobles possessed a monopoly of all political rights and power and could engage in commerce both within the city and outside it, including international maritime trade with the East that was the traditional source of Venetian wealth, enriching those who engaged in it and providing the Venetian treasury with considerable revenue from the import and export customs duties. Below the nobles were the *cittadini originarii* (original citizens, i.e., citizens by birth), often referred to as just *cittadini*. To be a member of this group required proof of having been born in Venice of legitimately born ancestors who had resided in Venice for at least three generations and during that time

¹ See S. Kinser, ed. and I. Cazeaux, trans., *The Memoirs of Philippe de Commines*, 2 vols (Columbia, S.C., 1969–73), 2:493, quoted in D. Chambers and B. Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450–1630* (Oxford, 1992), p. 235.

² See G. Fedalto, “Le minoranze straniere a Venezia tra politica e legislazione,” in H.-G. Beck, M. Manoussacas, and A. Pertusi, eds., *Venezia: Centro di mediazione tra oriente e occidente, secoli xv–xvi: aspetti e problemi*, 2 vols (Florence, 1977), 1:148; P. Preto, “Peste e demografia: L'età moderna,” in *Venezia e la Peste: 1348–1797* (Venice, 1979), pp. 97–98; and P. Preto, “Le grandi pesti dell'età moderna: 1575–77 e 1630–1631,” in *Venezia e la Peste: 1348–1797*, pp. 123–126.

³ See A. Zannini, *Venezia città aperta: Gli stranieri e la Serenissima XIV–XVIII sec.* (Venice, 2009), pp. 30–34.

had not engaged in any “mechanical trade.” The *cittadini* had no political power, but many were employed in the upper echelons of the “civil service” of Venice, providing the government with stability in the face of the frequent rotation of the nobles in the various councils, courts, and magistracies of the Republic. Other *cittadini* earned their living engaging in urban professions such as law and medicine, and serving as notaries and scribes. Like the nobles, they could engage freely in trade in the city as well as with the Levant, and many were large-scale merchants and traders. Eventually, the ranks of the *cittadini* were closed, as had been that of the nobles, and their families were registered in the *Libro d'argento* (Silver Book), parallel to the *Libro d'oro* of the nobles. However, Venetians who met the requisite qualifications could still request to be admitted to *cittadini* status. The remaining approximately 90 per cent of the population of the city, the *popolo minuto*, had no political or economic rights and served as the large working force needed to keep the city functioning. Their numbers included many unemployed, sick, and indigent individuals, although they had no monopoly on poverty, for nobles and *cittadini* could also be poor.

It was possible for individual immigrants who desired to do so to give up all links and associations with their places of origin, to assimilate, and to be absorbed into the mainstream of the *popolo minuto*. Their integration could be socially facilitated by marrying a spouse who was a native or at least a long-time resident of Venice. Additionally, most significantly, foreigners could request to be admitted to one of two types of citizenship. The first, known as *cittadinanza de intus* (internal citizenship), above all enabled its holder to engage in trade within Venice and to acquire real estate. Legislation of 1305 fixed the requisite requirement as continuous residence in Venice and payment of taxes for 15 years, subsequently shortened as needed to attract immigrants during the course of the 14th century. Non-Venetians who desired to acquire the zealously guarded privilege of engaging in international maritime trade with the Levant and paying the same lower customs rate as the Venetian nobles and *cittadini originarii* had to acquire a second kind of citizenship, known as *cittadinanza de intus et de extra* (internal and external citizenship) that required 25 prior years of residence as taxpayers in the city and then had to be renewed every five years.⁴ Legislation of 1407 provided that by marrying

⁴ For a recent discussion of the changing requirements for citizenship in Venice, see Anna Bellavitis, *Identité, mariage, mobilité, mobilité sociale: citoyennes et citoyens à Venise*

a Venetian woman, these two waiting periods of 15 and 25 years could be shortened to eight and 15 years respectively.

In order to constitute a minority in Venice, a critical mass of foreigners had to maintain their group identity by retaining some combination of the religious, cultural, and linguistic or other characteristics that established their non-*Venezianità* (non-Venetianness). Such a group was often referred to as a *natione* or, on occasion, a *università* (community). The most frequent manner of expressing that status was to establish what was known as a *scuola* (confraternity), a lay association with its own bylaws (*mariegola* or *capitoli*) and officials, as did the associations of tradesmen and artisans in the city. The *scuole*, supervised by the Venetian government, assembled for religious feasts. If they did not possess their own building, they maintained altars in existing churches, at which members prayed to their patron saints and celebrated their days. *Scuole* were generally open to foreigners, although they usually had to pay an extra fee and could not become officials of the *scuola*.⁵ Additionally, foreigners could request permission to have their own *scuola* and to hold religious services of their own at an altar in an existing church or to erect their own building that would be financed by internal taxation and donations by wealthier members. In addition to promoting the group solidarity of foreigners who wished to retain their identity as a minority, *scuole* provided members with spiritual support as well as mutual economic assistance and charitable aid, especially by helping widows and orphans, dowering poor brides, and assisting at funerals, which was especially significant for foreigners who had no roots or contacts in the city.⁶

II

The size of minority groups in Venice at any given time is very hard, if not impossible, to determine, except for the Jews, whose numbers could be more accurately ascertained in official censuses because of their compulsory enforced residence in the ghetto, but even then uncertainties arise.

au XVI^e siècle (Rome, 2001), pp. 19–63, and also the chart on pp. 355–56. For the text of legislation of the Great Council of 21 August 1552 on citizenship, see Bellavitis, *Identité*, pp. 319–21, English translation in Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 276–78.

⁵ See, e.g., F. Ortalli, “*Per salute delle anime e delli corpi*”: *Scuole piccole a Venezia nel tardo Medioevo* (Venice, 2001), pp. 105–07.

⁶ See Ortalli, “*Per salute delle anime*,” pp. 102–04.

Additionally, it is often unclear whether a family name indicating a certain foreign city or country of origin refers specifically to the provenance of the individual in question or whether the family had resided in Venice using that name for generations. Moreover, the retention of such family names is not necessarily indicative of the degree of the maintenance of previous traditions, for the individual or the family in question may well have completely assimilated into Venetian society. Moreover, many foreigners Italianized, or rather Venetianized, their names in order to appear to be Venetian and benefit from certain privileges.⁷ Since Venice never imposed any requirements on where foreigners had to reside—with the exception of German merchants engaged in large-scale international trade, all Jews after 1516, and Muslim merchants after 1621—they tended to settle in the city based on their own social, professional, and economic considerations, which generally meant in proximity to other immigrants, especially of their own group, in areas in which inexpensive housing was available.⁸ The reconstruction of the locations in which identifiable groups of foreigners lived, usually based on street names, is now being refined by analyses of the *decima* tax on real estate and of other archival sources, and the results point to a substantial presence in the districts of Castello, Rialto, and San Marco, as well as in Cannaregio.⁹ More research seems necessary to differentiate between activities in which a significant number of the minority in question engaged or assumed a disproportionate role, and those in which some individuals happened to engage; for various reasons, activities associated with commerce and artisanal work tended to predominate in some groups, and military or domestic service

⁷ For one example, the case of the Albanians, see S. Moretti, "Gli albanesi a Venezia tra XV e XVI secolo," in D. Calabi and P. Lanaro, eds., *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri, xiv–xviii secolo* (Rome/Bari, 1998), p. 7.

⁸ See B. Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia, 1300–1510* (Rome, 1997), pp. 219, 222, and 227.

⁹ See, for example, Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali*, pp. 219–27, and the plans on pp. 221, 223, and 225. See also the famous prospective plan of Jacopo de' Barbari of 1500, with the addition of locations of the major dwelling and business places of foreigners in Venice in D. Calabi, "Gli stranieri e la città," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 5 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, p. 916; although it should be noted that as of 1500, neither the Jews nor the Turks were confined to a specific area; also the detailed maps of Venice indicating the location of the dwelling of foreigners on the basis of the *catastico* of 1661, in J. F. Chauvard, "Scale di osservazione e inserimento degli stranieri nello spazio veneziano tra xvii e xviii secolo," in Calabi and Lanaro, eds., *La città italiana*, pp. 87, 91, 93, and 99, and the methodological caution expressed in note 2, pp. 104–05.

in others. In any case, the numbers of any group could fluctuate greatly, not only because of births and deaths but also due to immigration and, probably to a lesser extent, emigration.

Consequently, as Andrea Zannini concluded, "the problem of quantifying, even approximately, the size of the various communities of foreigners in Venice seems at the present state of research, unresolvable."¹⁰ For the medieval period, he pointed out, only very approximate information is available on the total population of Venice. The first census of Venice was undertaken in 1509, but the documentation has been lost, and he believed that it is only possible to estimate a total population of 100,000 inhabitants. More reliable information is extant for the second half of the 16th century, but without even an approximate estimate of the number of foreigners in the city.

However, a significant amount of information about the places of origin of foreigners naturalized in Venice has been retrieved from surviving grants of citizenship preserved in the Venetian state archives. While presumably many or even most of these individuals did not retain links with their past but acculturated, assimilated, and integrated into Venetian society, the grants of naturalization do give some indication of the origins of a group of "elite" immigrants who could meet the naturalization requirements. An investigation by Reinhold Mueller of the privileges of citizenship *de intus et de extra* granted between 1305, when the requirements were definitively fixed, and the end of the 15th century reveals that approximately 3500 were granted to around 4000 individuals, for an average of around 18 to 20 annually.¹¹ During the first two years after 1305, 125 grants were made; then from 1330 to 1429, the annual average was between 25 and 40 grants. However, after 1430 the number of privileges issued dropped to fewer than ten annually, probably as a result of the increase in the area under Venetian rule and the immigration of citizens residing in its major cities who were granted *de intus* citizenship in Venice. Although these naturalization figures did not constitute appreciable demographic growth for a city with a population of around 80,000, nevertheless, from an economic point of view, these newcomers constituted an

¹⁰ See A. Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, p. 38.

¹¹ See R. C. Mueller, "Veneti facti privilegio': stranieri naturalizzati a Venezia tra xiv e xvi secolo," in Calabi and Lanaro, eds., *La città italiana*, pp. 41–51, summarized in Bellavitis, *Identité*, p. 39; and Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, pp. 36–37; see also L. Mola and R. C. Mueller, "Essere straniero a Venezia nel tardo Medioevo: accoglienza e rifiuto nei privilegi di cittadinanza e nelle sentenze criminali," in S. Cavaciocchi, ed., *Le migrazioni in Europa (sec XIII–XVIII)* (Florence, 1995), pp. 838–51.

increase in the commercial and economic elite. By areas of origin, initially the Tuscans were the most numerous, 281 Florentines and 260 Luccans for a total of 541, followed by inhabitants of the Veneto (540), and then by Lombards (515). For the considerably later period from 1534 to 1622, Anna Bellavitis discovered that the Senate issued 278 privileges of citizenship (55 *de intus* and 223 *de intus et de extra*) to 325 individuals, and in 150 cases also to their descendents, for an average of around three privileges and 3.6 new citizens annually. To a great extent, they were Venetian subjects who came from the *terraferma*, especially from Bergamo, and engaged in commercial activity or were craftsmen, and to a much lesser extent individuals from other Italian states and the *stato da mar*.¹²

Not on the basis of citizenship grants but rather adopting a prosopographic approach, Brunhilde Imhaus selected out of a very large number of documents between 1300 and 1510 the names of 2938 immigrants who most probably came from southeastern Europe. This total was comprised of 1210 Dalmatians, 932 Greeks, 637 Albanians, 84 miscellaneous South Slavs (Georgians, Circassians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Russians), 35 Tartars, 21 Moors, and 19 Turks. Of these immigrants, the overwhelming number, 2782, came from the Venetian colonies, while only 156 came from outside the Venetian state.¹³ Since the number of immigrants seems low and also only 6.5 per cent of the individuals were women, Zannini suggested that the names found represent only a small percentage of the total immigration from the southeast to Venice, although they did indicate the diversity of its origins.¹⁴

Giorgio Fedalto believed that the Greeks in Venice numbered around 4000 or slightly fewer at the end of the 15th century and either 4000 or possibly around 5000 at the end of the 16th, and that they constituted the largest community of strangers in the city.¹⁵ Phillip Braunstein accepted that figure for the Greek community and thought that the German presence in Venice was roughly the same or possibly larger.¹⁶ On this basis,

¹² See Bellavitis, *Identité*, pp. 43, 50, with a detailed breakdown on pp. 50–56; cf. Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, pp. 113–14.

¹³ See Imhaus, *Le minoranze*, pp. 38–39; also the charts and maps on pp. 41, 43, 45, 47, 55, and 57, and the list of individual names with available information, pp. 435–562.

¹⁴ See Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, pp. 38–39.

¹⁵ See G. Fedalto, “Le minoranze straniere,” 1148–49, and G. Fedalto, “Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova, 1550–1700,” in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 499, 505.

¹⁶ See P. Braunstein, “Remarques sur la population allemande de Venise a la fin du moyen age,” in Beck, Manoussacas, and Pertusi, eds., *Venezia*, 1:233–43.

Zannini advanced the hypothesis that at the end of the Middle Ages, foreigners constituted no fewer than 15,000 to 20,000 persons, and perhaps many more, out of a population of around 100,000 to 110,000.¹⁷ As for the Jews, a judicious examination of the extant evidence seems to point to a slow rise in population from approximately 700 in 1516 when the ghetto was established, according to one contemporary source, up to between 2500 and 3000 individuals in the first half of the 17th century, and then a gradual decline to 1626 at the time of the abolition of the ghetto in 1797.¹⁸ Thus, very generally speaking, the Jews seem to have constituted between slightly more than 1 per cent and 2 per cent of the total population of the city, and may possibly have constituted the third largest readily identifiable group of foreigners in Venice, after the Greeks and the Germans. Hopefully, future research will further refine all these estimated figures.

III

Understandably, for reasons of proximity and ease of travel, many immigrants to the city of Venice came from the Venetian *terraferma*. Encouraging this was the fact that all citizens, but not all inhabitants, of the large cities of the Venetian *terraferma*, as well as those of Venetian Dalmatia, possessed *citizenship de intus* but not *de intus et de extra*, in the city of Venice itself.

Immigrants also came from elsewhere on the Italian peninsula. Especially prominent in the earlier period were the Luccans, impelled by political strife in early 14th-century Lucca.¹⁹ They became very significant in the Venetian silk industry, and their immigration continued in the 15th century. Initially, the Luccans in Venice prayed in the monastery of the Servi di Maria, a Luccan order that had established a monastery in Venice in 1316, and they also used it as a burial place. Then in 1359,

¹⁷ See Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, p. 40.

¹⁸ See G. Favero and F. Trivellato, "Gli abitanti del ghetto di Venezia in età moderna: dati e ipotesi," *Zakhor* 7 (2004), 44. On the figure for 1516, see M. Sanuto, *I Diarii*, 58 vols (Venice, 1899–1903), 22:108–09; and Favero and Trivellato, "Gli abitanti del ghetto di Venezia in età moderna," p. 45 note 1. The information on the ghetto in the *catastici* of 1713, 1739, 1771, and 1810 has been published and analyzed in G. Carletto, *Il ghetto veneziano nel settecento attraverso i catastici* (Rome, 1981).

¹⁹ On the Luccans in Venice, see L. Mola, *La comunità dei Lucchesi a Venezia; Immigrazione e industria della seta nel tardo medioevo* (Venice, 1994), esp. pp. 87–107; also Calabi, "Gli stranieri e la città," p. 915; Ortalli, "Per salute delle anime," pp. 104–07; and Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, pp. 71–72.

they established in that same place the *scuola* of the Volta Santo (Holy Face), which at its height during the late 14th century and the earlier 15th consisted, according to a 16th-century writer, of 600 members.²⁰ In 1379 the Luccans erected on the side of the church, at their own expense, an adequately sized chapel for their services, and in 1398 they acquired land to build a new *scuola* and a *ospizio* (best rendered as a hostel, shelter, or alms-house) for the poor. Immigrants from Milan established their *scuola* of San Giovanni Battista e Sant'Ambrogio in the church of the Frari in 1361.²¹ Consisting at the time of around 300 members, it was only allowed to meet twice a year in the chapel assigned to them, and at one time, a "Ruga dei Milanesi" existed in Venice.²² The Florentines, known especially for their position in the wool industry, formed a *universitas mercatorum*; sometime before 1409, they organized a *scuola*, and in 1435 the Council of Ten allowed them to establish the Compagnia di San Giovanni Battista in the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, which almost immediately was transferred to the church of Santa Maria dei Frari, where they possessed their own altar and a burial space.²³

Two significant groups of immigrants came to Venice from the eastern side of the Adriatic. The first consisted of the Dalmatians or *Schiavoni* (Slavonians), from what today is Croatia, especially after the Dalmatian coast was taken over by Venice in 1420. These immigrants gave their name to the Riva dei Schiavone along the Grand Canal, just to the east of Piazza San Marco. They engaged in a wide range of activities in Venice, including especially those linked to the sea, serving as merchants, sailors, and ship-builders in the Arsenal and elsewhere. Many were poor and rowed in the galleys or served as domestic servants. Together with the Albanians and the Greeks, the Dalmatians played a very important role in Venetian military campaigns on the *terraferma* and throughout the *stato da mar* as *stratioti*, armed mounted light cavalry troops, leading the Senate to note in 1524 that they were the main element of the Venetian power.²⁴ Some Dalmatian sailors, pointing out their military service to Venice and their

²⁰ See Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice, 1663), cited in Mola, *La comunità dei Lucchesi*, p. 98.

²¹ See Ortalli, "Per salute delle anime," pp. 104–06.

²² See Ortalli, "Per salute delle anime," pp. 104, 109; and Calabi, "Gli stranieri e la città," p. 915.

²³ See Ortalli, "Per salute delle anime," pp. 107–08; and Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, pp. 73–74.

²⁴ See Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4: *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, p. 262.

great poverty, for which they received no assistance from anyone since they were foreigners, asked for permission to establish a *scuola* similar to the other *scuole* in the city. Their *scuola* was initially established in 1451 in the Ospedale di Santa Caterina next to the church of San Giovanni del Tempio, and then on its own as San Giorgio degli Schiavone, located not far from the Arsenal in Castello.²⁵

The Albanians constituted the second group of immigrants from the eastern shores of the Adriatic. Links between Venice and Albania intensified after the main Albanian centers, including Durazzo, Alessio, and Scutari (Shkodër), were conquered by Venice around the end of the 14th century. Many Albanians earned a living as artisans, bakers, barbers, and workers in the wool industry and the glass industry at Murano or engaged in petty trade, while others were brought to Venice as slaves and used as household servants or conscripted into the military.²⁶ The Albanians established their *scuola* in 1442 in the monastery of San Gallo, and then in 1448 moved it to the church of San Maurizio. After Scutari fell to the Turks in 1479, more Albanian immigrants came to Venice, and ten years later, in 1489, the Albanians purchased some land adjacent to the church, on which they decided to erect their own building. Pointing out that “even the Armenians have their little *ospedale*, but we do not have one,” it was decided that all members of the *scuola*, which in 1497 possessed more than 150 dues-paying members, were to contribute toward the construction of a small *ospedale*. As the Dalmatians and the Greeks, the Albanians also played a very important role in Venetian military forces as *stratioti*. Unlike other minority groups, the Albanians lived scattered throughout the city, which would seem to indicate that their choice of residence was based primarily on economic and professional considerations, rather than on ethnic ones. After the 16th century, the significance of the Albanians gradually declined, and in 1780, the building containing their *scuola* was expropriated and given to the *scuola* of the bakers.

The Armenian presence in Venice dates back to at least the 13th century. In his will of 1253, Marco Ziani, a descendent of Doge Pietro Ziani, expressed his desire that the Armenians be able to stay “in perpetuity” in the house

²⁵ See Calabi, “Gli stranieri e la città,” p. 917.

²⁶ On the Albanians, see S. Moretti, “Gli Albanesi a Venezia tra xiv e xvi secolo,” pp. 5–19; also F. Thiriet, “Sur les communautés grecque et albanaise à Venise,” in Beck, Manoussacas, and Pertusi, eds., *Venezia*, 1:217–31; F. Pedrocco, “Vicende della Scuola,” in T. Pignatti, ed., *Le scuole di Venezia* (Milan, 1981), pp. 92–93; and Calabi, “Gli stranieri e la città,” pp. 915–17.

in which they then dwelled at San Zulian (San Giuliano), in the Calle dei Lanterne, eventually called the Calle dei Armini, near San Marco, and that any necessary maintenance be undertaken at his expense.²⁷ By 1341, the Armenian house (*domus Arminorum*) existed as a organized structure while the Armenians possessed a cemetery on the island of San Giorgio that was later covered up when the church still standing there was constructed, and the presence of a figure called the *archiepiscopus Armenorum* (archbishop of the Armenians) seems to suggest the existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Then in 1348, they acquired a church and convent of San Giovanni Battista dei Frati Armeni in Castello.²⁸ By 1434, the Armenians possessed a small church in the Calle degli Armeni, in which they worshipped according to the Armenian Christian rite. In 1497 it was restored, and an *ospizio* was constructed next to it. An important result of the Armenian settlement in Venice was the development of Armenian printing in the city, and the first book in Armenian was published in Venice in 1512.

The Armenians became especially significant in Venetian trade with the East in the 17th and 18th centuries. When in 1715 the Armenian monk Mechitar (1676–1749), who favored a rapprochement between the Armenian Church and Roman Catholicism, sought with some of his followers refuge in Venice from the Turks who were about to capture Venetian Modon where they then resided, he was given the island of San Lazzaro on which he established a monastery that became a center for Armenian studies and led to a revival of Armenian consciousness.

IV

Immigrants from the Germanic lands, called Tedeschi, constituted a very significant minority group in Venice. A discussion of their status raises the issue of the establishment of compulsory residential quarters for at least some members of a minority group in Venice as well as that of the treatment of individuals who, from the Catholic perspective, represented a heresy that was far more serious than that potentially posed by the

²⁷ For a discussion of this will, see G. Ortalli, "Tra Venezia e l'Armenia: Alle radici di un lungo rapporto," in B. L. Zekian and A. Ferrari, eds., *Gli Armeni in Venezia: Dagli Sceriman a Mechitar* (Venice, 2004), p. 24, and the text on pp. 39–40.

²⁸ See B. L. Zekian, "Gli Armeni a Venezia e nel Veneto e San Lazzaro degli Armeni," in B. L. Zekian, ed., *Gli Armeni in Italia* (Rome, 1990), p. 40.

Armenians. The most visible symbol of the presence of individuals from the Germanic lands in the city of Venice was their combination residence and storage place for merchandise, known as the Fondaco dei Tedeschi; the word *fondaco* constituted an Italianized form of the Arabic word *funduq*, meaning storage space or warehouse from the Greek *pandokion*, literally a hotel, an institution with which the Venetians were familiar as a result of their travels in the Muslim world.²⁹ Initially, in 1228, the German merchants were given a *fondaco* in a building that originally had been the public *fondaco* at San Bartolomeo, with space for around 100 to 120 merchants, along with their servants, porters, packers, sealers, and other employees for a total of around 200 individuals.³⁰ Some of them formed their own devotional *scuole* and obtained permission to use altars in existing churches in the city. Thus in 1413, the porters of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi received permission to utilize an altar in the church of San Bartolomeo for functions in honor of their patron saint, and the *ligadori* held their celebrations in the chapel of the Sanctissima Trinita of the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo.³¹

Some 40 years later, in 1268, the Venetians established a magistracy known as the Visdomini del Fondaco dei Tedeschi, whose function was to supervise the regulations regarding the merchants in the *fondaco*, and especially to assure that they were paying the appropriate taxes, using the Venetian brokers (*sensali*) assigned to them, and selling only to Venetians and not directly to foreigners. Regulations issued in 1475 reasserted that all German merchants were to reside in the *fondaco* with all their merchandise, subject to a penalty of 50 ducats for lodging elsewhere.³² In 1479, since allegedly much fraud was committed to the detriment of the customs revenue because the gate of the quay of the *fondaco* was open for a great part of the night, it was ordered that it be closed at sunset and not opened for anyone until the sounding of the Marangona bell. Similar regulations were issued for the gate of the *fondaco* itself, and penalties were set for any violations. However, when in 1483 the merchants complained that they were exposed to dangers when they came at night with gold, silver, and valuable goods to the closed gate of the quay and could

²⁹ For a description of the Venetian "warehouse-palace" in Alexandria, see F. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, 1973), p. 287.

³⁰ The standard works on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi remain G. Thomas, *Capitular des deutschen Hauses in Venedig* (Berlin, 1874); and H. Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venedig*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1887).

³¹ See Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, p. 45.

³² See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 328–29.

not have it opened, the Collegio ordered that for their satisfaction and to avoid any harm to the customs revenue, a small door of a specified size be made in the gate to admit them in accordance with the regulations in effect prior to 1479.

In view of the role of the German merchants in importing into Venice northern products, including much desired precious metals such as gold, silver, and copper, and then in turn purchasing and exporting goods of local provenance as well as those coming from the East, when in 1505 the *fondaco* burned down, the government built for the merchants on the Grand Canal next to the Rialto Bridge a new and spacious *fondaco*.³³ An ordinance of 1528 reiterated that those Germans and other foreigners from the northern lands who were required to reside in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi were to do so, while those who were not required to live there were to stay in other specific houses set apart for them subject to a fine of 25 ducats. This legislation, which in 1531 the Collegio ordered published and enforced, may no longer have been motivated solely by the traditional commercial considerations of trying to prevent evasion of the customs payments as well as unsupervised trade between the Tedeschi and other merchants, but also by the desire to limit the spread of new Protestant ideas and practices by restricting the freedom of residence of all those coming from the Germanic lands and elsewhere north of the Alps. Understandably, German merchants were suspected of bringing heretical Protestant books into Venice and of spreading heretical ideas. However, not all of the German merchants were Protestants, and in any case, the trade of the merchants in the *fondaco* was too important for the government to disturb. Finally, in 1657, at which point the danger that Venice might become Protestant no longer existed, the Protestant merchants in the *fondaco* received permission to hold private services and to bring in a preacher from Germany.

While the *fondaco* became a center for all kinds of activities for its inhabitants, it by no means served as the place of residence of all Germans in Venice but, rather, constituted the premises given to a group of elite German merchants whose presence the Venetian government very much desired to attract to the city yet whose activities they wanted to supervise and control.³⁴ According to a report of the papal nuncio of

³³ See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 329–30.

³⁴ The past concentration on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi and minimization of the presence of other Germans in the exclusion of other Germans has been noted by P. Braun-

around 1580, based on information given to him by a Jesuit priest, almost 200 merchants and their servants resided in the *fondaco* out of around 900 Germans in the city, of whom 700 were Protestant.³⁵ *De facto*, many other Germans settled in Venice with their families while other individuals lodged in special inns or in private homes. They engaged in a very wide range of professional activities, including metallurgy, goldsmithing, working with textiles, tailoring, baking, shoe-making, and other artisanal activities, as well as domestic service. Printing was introduced into Venice by John of Speyer in 1469, who was followed by other significant German printers, and that industry also employed many Germans. Some Germans possessed their own *scuole*, for example, the shoe-makers and the bakers, who manufactured biscuits for the Venetian fleet, and met in the church of San Stefano.³⁶ The Germans in Venice also possessed an inn for pilgrims in which, according to the oft-quoted observation of the German pilgrim Felix Faber from Ulm, who passed through Venice on his way to the Holy Land in 1483, the host, hostess, domestics, and servants all spoke German and one did not hear a word of Italian; even the dog of the establishment was glad when anyone from any part of Germany entered, while he growled at the arrival of Italians, French, Greeks, and Slavs.³⁷

V

The Greeks in Venice, who may have rivaled the Germans for the distinction of being the largest minority group in the city, constituted the most important Greek community in the Hellenic Diaspora.³⁸ Since Venice had initially been a part of the Byzantine Empire and remained in close contact with Byzantium, it is understandable that Byzantine Greeks visited Venice during the Middle Ages, primarily in diplomatic missions

stein, "Remarques sur la population allemande de Venise a la fin du moyen age," in Beck, Manoussacas, and Pertusi, eds., *Venezia: Centro di mediazione*, 1:233–34.

³⁵ See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 330–31.

³⁶ See Calabi, "Gli stranieri e la città," pp. 927–28; and Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, p. 43.

³⁷ See Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, p. 46.

³⁸ Comprehensive specialized articles on many of the developments and institutions referred to in the following discussion of the Greeks in Venice have been published in M. F. Tiepolo and E. Tonetti, eds., *I Greci a Venezia, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studio: Venezia, 5–7 novembre 1998* (Venice, 2002), with précis in Italian, English, and Greek. According to the available consulted records, during the period from 1250 to 1500, fewer than 60 Greek immigrants to the city of Venice itself obtained citizenship; see R. Mueller, "Greeks in Venice," in C. A. Maltezou, ed., *Ricchi e poveri nella società dell'Oriente Grecolatino* (Venice, 1998), p. 157.

to negotiate trade agreements, and some Greeks, especially inhabitants of Venetian possessions in the East, settled in the city. The Ecumenical Council of Ferrara-Florence, convened in 1438 in order to end the schism between the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, brought many Greeks to Venice as their port of entry into Italy. Subsequently, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 induced a substantial number of Greeks to migrate to Venice. Other Greeks came to Venice from Venetian territories in the East, either on their own or increasingly in response to the constant Ottoman advances. Many of the Greek immigrants served in the fleet as oarsmen (*galleotti*), both voluntary and conscripted, and sailors, as well as on land together with the Dalmatians and Albanians as *stratiotes*; others were shipowners, merchants, and traders on various levels, and a large number earned a living in the city in a wide range of activities as laborers and artisans, including shipyard workers, caulkers, tailors, barbers, glass-workers, shoe-makers, artists, carpenters, and domestic servants, while many lived on the margins of society.³⁹

Of special importance were the learned individuals who brought with them the classical and medieval Greek heritage in the form of manuscripts and translations and were active in the city as teachers, copyists, and translators, thereby giving great impetus to the diffusion of humanism. Among the famous learned Greeks in Venice was Cardinal Bessarion, who termed the city “almost another Byzantium” (*quasi alterum Byzantium*) and gave his superb collection of Greek and Latin manuscripts to the Republic on the two conditions that they never be given away and that the Republic establish an adequate building to house them, leading to the eventual construction of the Biblioteca Marciana in Piazza San Marco. After printing was introduced in Venice, the first book in Greek was published in Venice in 1471, and subsequently several Greek presses were established, including the famous Aldine press of Aldo Manuzio that undertook the important task of selecting and editing texts and, with the help of Greek typesetters and proofreaders, printed numerous first editions.

The immigration of Greeks into Venice continued during the 16th and 17th centuries, as the Ottoman Turks advanced westward, capturing Coron and Modon in 1500, Nauplia di Romania and Monenvale in 1540, Cyprus in 1571, and Crete in 1669. Among these immigrants were also artisans who created material objects such as religious icons and bells, as well as artists such as Doménikos Theotokópoulos, better known as El Greco, from

³⁹ See Thiriet, “Sur les communautés grecque et albanaise à Venise,” pp. 220–21, and Mueller, “Greeks in Venice,” p. 169.

Crete, who spent a few years in Venice before moving on to Spain. Venice continued to serve as a center of Hellenic studies as it published classical Greek texts, including patristic literature, liturgical works, breviaries, and books of other genres not only for the Greeks of Italy but also those living under Ottoman rule. Indeed, it has been estimated that around half of all the Greek books printed in the 17th century were published in Venice.⁴⁰

The Greeks differed somewhat from the previously discussed minorities, with the exception of the Armenians, in that most belonged not to the dominant Roman Catholic Church but, rather, to the Greek Orthodox (Byzantine) faith. In the early 15th century, the Venetians had forbidden Greek clerics to lead services anywhere in Venice, even in private houses, in accordance with those rites. However, after the reconciliation between Western Latin Catholicism and the Eastern Byzantine Church at the Council of Florence in 1439, the Venetian government became more tolerant and gradually permitted the Greek rite to be celebrated in certain churches.⁴¹

In 1456, with the influx of Greeks into Venice following the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks, in response to the request of Cardinal Isidore, the Metropolitan (Diocesan head) of Kiev, the Senate authorized the Greeks either to select an existing church or to build a new one in which to pray according to their Orthodox rite, but apparently nothing was done. Then in 1470, the Council of Ten determined that no services could be held according to the Greek rites except in the church of San Biaggio in Castello as previously, subject to a fine of 100 lire on the cleric involved and 50 lire on each person attending.⁴² Subsequently, when in 1479 the Greeks requested permission to build a church of their own, the Council, deeming it undesirable for political reasons to allow around 600 people to assemble together, advised them to attend the Catholic churches in the city. In 1498, the Greeks requested permission to establish a *scuola* dedicated to St. Nicholas in the church of San Biagio. In support, they cited their loyal devotion to Venice on land and at sea, especially in the conquest of Dalmatia, and also the precedents of *scuole* granted to the Slavs, Albanians, and other nations. The Council of Ten granted their request but did not allow the *scuola* to have more than 250 male members, although all women who wished to enter could be admitted.⁴³

⁴⁰ See Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova," p. 258.

⁴¹ See Thiriet, "Sur les communautés grecque et albanaise à Venise," pp. 223–24.

⁴² See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, p. 333.

⁴³ See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 333–34.

An investigation of the registers of the Greek community reveals that in 1498 the *scuola* possessed 58 members (42 men and 16 women), a number that by 1561–63 had greatly increased to 741 (613 men and 128 women).⁴⁴ When in 1511 the Greeks again petitioned for the right to build a church that would be large enough for their needs and to establish a cemetery, they expressed their confidence that “your lordships will grant it, both because you are men of honour and devotion, and to show us that in your eyes we are no worse than the Armenian heretics and the Jewish infidels who here and in other parts of your lordships’ dominions have synagogues and mosques for worshipping God in their own misguided way,”⁴⁵ adding their hope that the Signoria would consider them to be true and Catholic Christians and treat them as such by granting their request. Although in 1514 the permission was granted with the approval of Pope Leo X, who placed the Greeks directly under his supervision, the Venetians still suspected that the Greeks, once they had their own church and priest and were independent from the Venetian hierarchy, might revert back to their previous schismatic practices. Thus, in 1528 the Venetian patriarch Girolamo Querino took steps to excommunicate the entire Greek community and anyone associating with them, locked the worshippers in their church during Holy Week, and considered the schismatic Greeks to be worse than if they were Jews (*pezzo che se fussino zudei*).⁴⁶ Construction on their church, known as San Giorgio dei Greci, located very near Piazza San Marco and financed to a great extent by a tax imposed on all Greek ships coming to Venice, commenced in 1539 and was completed only in 1573. In a very significant step, in 1577, the Venetian government allowed the church to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox patriarch in Constantinople, with its bishop assuming the title of the Metropolitan of Philadelphia and exercising jurisdiction over not only the Greek Orthodox in Venice but also the Greek Orthodox communities in Dalmatia, Istra, and the Ionian islands.⁴⁷ Subsequently, in the middle of the 17th century, two buildings designed by the prominent Venetian architect Baldassare Longhena were constructed on land purchased next to the church. One contained the *scuola* di San Nicolò with a *ospedale* for

⁴⁴ See Fedalto, “Le minoranze straniere,” p. 148 note 14, also note 15; also in Fedalto, “Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova,” p. 255.

⁴⁵ See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 334–35.

⁴⁶ See D. J. Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 67.

⁴⁷ See Fedalto, “Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova,” pp. 255–57.

the poor Greeks, while the other, the Collegio Flangini, supported by an annual subvention from the Venetian government, offered instruction in Greek, Latin, and the general humanistic curriculum, and both together combined to give the Greeks in Venice an effective cultural center.

VI

The case of the Ottoman Turks was somewhat more complex, especially since the term "Turk" was generally misleadingly used to refer not only to subjects of the Ottoman Turks but also to all Muslims.⁴⁸ Because the Muslims had not relapsed from Catholicism, they were considered infidels rather than heretics, as were also the Jews. Religious infidelity, unlike heresy, was basically tolerated in the Catholic world, although often with reluctance and much ambivalence, and in Venice an attempt eventually was made to segregate infidels. After the Ottomans took possession of the Dalmatian hinterland in the later 14th century, and especially after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the presence of Muslims in Venice became more frequent and attracted increasing attention in art and literature. Since the Ottomans did not maintain permanent representatives abroad, their ambassadors and diplomatic missions came from Istanbul to Venice briefly to negotiate peace treaties and settle other important issues with the Venetian government. In order to maintain their commercial privileges in the Mediterranean ports of the expanding Ottoman Empire, the Venetians had to extend reciprocal privileges in Venice to Ottoman subjects, both Muslim and Jewish. Most of these Ottoman subjects came to Venice temporarily by themselves, unaccompanied by their families, and stayed in inns or private homes. Additionally, Ottomans who had been captured in warfare or purchased from others served as domestics in Venetian patrician households.

As well as being considered religiously undesirable, visiting Ottoman Muslims were increasingly perceived as constituting a real political threat, since the Ottoman Empire had long controlled the Dalmatian hinterland

⁴⁸ For the basic treatment of the Turks in Venice, see P. Preto, *Venezia e i turchi* (Florence, 1975), esp. pp. 116–45; and for the latest, see M. P. Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente* (Venice, 2010), pp. 211–41. See also the account in B. Ravid, "The Religious, Economic and Social Background and Context of the Establishment of the Ghetti of Venice," in G. Cozzi, ed., *Gli Ebrei e Venezia* (Milan, 1987), pp. 234–43, to a considerable extent based on Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia, n.s., b. 187, which unfortunately I have not been able to reconsult.

and continued its designs on Venetian possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean, conquering Cyprus in 1571. During the War of the Holy League, when the Senate heard that its *bailo* (ambassador) in Constantinople, together with the Venetian merchants there, had been arrested, it did the same to Turkish subjects in Venice—according to one source, 75 Muslim and 97 Jewish Ottoman merchants⁴⁹—in order to facilitate the release of their own citizens and their property. After the news of the victory of the combined League forces at Lepanto in October 1571 reached Venice, the Ottoman merchants, who meanwhile had been released, fled from the Rialto and locked themselves inside for four days out of fear of being stoned. Presumably this experience led them, according to the papal nuncio, in August 1573 to request from the government “for the convenience of trade, a place of their own, as the Jews have their ghetto.”⁵⁰ In response to a request by one Francesco di Dimitri Littino, in August 1575, the Senate decided to require the Ottoman Muslims to reside together in one house while they were in the city since their property might be stolen, giving rise to trouble and possible harm to the treasury; worse, it was claimed that with little respect for God, they could go around at night wherever they wished in the houses of Christians, with scandal and the danger of many troubles.

Eventually, in March 1579 the Collegio selected the house of Bartolomeo Vendramin, located in Rialto near the church of San Matteo and the former site of the Osteria con l’Insegna dell’Angelo, for the residence of the Turks, but in August, the Collegio reversed itself and decided instead to assign the house of Zaccaria Gabriel in San Polo. This induced Giulia, the widow of Francesco Littino, to come to the Signoria. Recalling the concession granted to her late husband and pointing out that, since the house of Gabriel was not yet ready, the Ottomans were living all over the city, she requested permission to find another house in which the Turks could live together until the house of Gabriel was ready. The Signoria responded by granting her request on condition that she submit daily to the Collegio a list of all Muslims arriving and departing from her place. Thereupon, the Littino family rented the premises of Vendramin and in it housed many

⁴⁹ For these numbers, see C. Kafdar, “A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986), 200, photo-reproduced in S. Subrahmanyam, ed., *Merchant Networks in the Early Modern World* (Aldershot, 1996).

⁵⁰ See A. Buffardi, ed., *Nunziature di Venezia*, 42 vols (Rome, 1958–2008), vol. 11: 18 giugno 1573–22 dicembre 1576, ed. Adriana Buffardi (1972), p. 69, cited in Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, p. 130.

of the Albanian and Bosnian (i.e., European) Ottoman Muslims with their merchandise, while the Asiatic Turks lived in other inns and in private homes, to the constant concern of the Venetian government for both religious reasons and also on account of the hostile attitude of the populace toward the Turks.

An anonymous memorandum addressed to the Venetian government in 1602, which might have only constituted a literary presentation in one of the Venetian academies,⁵¹ urged that the Ottomans not be given a *fondaco* of their own. Among other things, it claimed that the concentration of many Ottomans in one place would be very dangerous and lead to the erection of mosques and to the worship of Mohammed, causing greater scandal than that provoked by the Jews and the Protestant Germans. Also, the memorandum asserted that the pernicious innovation of a *fondaco* would further the political aims of the Turks who, headed by a sultan and possessing great naval power, were in a position to harm Venice more than were the Jews, who were without any head or prince and were everywhere repressed.

Eventually, the former Osteria passed into the hands of new owners, who in June 1620 gave the Littini notice that they had either to evict the Turks from the premises or else pay a much higher annual rent. The Littini turned to the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia. Noting that serious troubles were occurring daily because many Ottomans lived spread out in the city in private homes, the Cinque Savii recommended instead a suitable house on the Grand Canal at San Giacomo dell'Orio, near the church of San Stae (St. Eustachius), far removed from the centers of Rialto and San Marco, that the government had bought in 1381 for Niccolò d'Este, the Marquis of Ferrara.

In March 1621, the College approved the report of the Cinque Savii, who had proposed a long set of regulations establishing the procedure for the preparation of a *fondaco* for the Ottomans and its subsequent administration. They included extensive construction intended to limit access to the outside world to authorized doors that were to be locked from the outside with a secure key at sunset and opened again at sunrise as well as minimal visibility into and out of the *fondaco*, all of which had to be undertaken without any expense to the government before any Turks could move in. The guards, who were to be permanently stationed at each door, were not to allow either women or Christian men in at any time. Further very

⁵¹ See A. Sagredo and F. Berchet, *Il Fondaco dei Turchi in Venezia* (Milan, 1860), p. 28.

minute provisions were made for the preparation of the living quarters of the merchants and the areas set aside for their merchandise, separating the merchants from Constantinople and Asia from the Bosnians and Albanians because their customs were different. Finally, all Ottomans who were already in Venice or who were to come in the future, were to go and reside in the *fondaco*, and anyone housing them elsewhere for any reason whatsoever, was subject to corporeal or financial punishment.⁵² Thus, finally the Ottoman Muslims possessed a place of their own, as, according to the papal nuncio, they had sought 50 years previously. The Venetian government apparently intended to enforce their segregation, for in September 1623, it ordered all Venetians to evict Ottomans dwelling in their houses within two days, and in late December of that same year, warned 15 Venetian innkeepers not to lodge any Ottomans overnight, under penalty of the galleys, banishment, or jail. As for facilities for prayers, according to the latest study of the Turks in Venice the *fondaco* also contained "a small mosque, or rather room for prayer, on whose walls were written in red paint short verses from the Koran, whose traces were still visible in the middle of the 19th century."⁵³ It would appear that Muslims who died in Venice were buried on the Lido, as were Protestants and Jews, but no traces of a Muslim cemetery have been found.⁵⁴

As the Venetian Empire in the East increasingly passed into Ottoman hands, the number of Ottomans, especially merchants from Dalmatia and Albania, coming to Venice also increased, because the Venetian government protected them and encouraged their commercial activities. However, as a result of the commercial decline in the Mediterranean that affected both Venice and the Ottoman Empire, at the end of the 17th century the importance of the Turks in Venice diminished, and the presence of the Asiatic Turks almost completely disappeared. By the later 1700s, the Fondaco dei Turchi was in very poor condition and required

⁵² See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice, A Documentary History*, pp. 350–52. Many of these measures or similar ones had already been applied to the previously established Jewish ghetto, although Christians were allowed to enter the ghetto during daytime and indeed had to if they wished to avail themselves of the Jewish pawnshops. See below, and for much greater detail, B. Ravid, "Curfew Time in the Ghetti of Venice," in E. Kittell and T. Madden, eds., *Medieval and Renaissance Venice* (Urbana/Chicago, 1999), pp. 237–75, photo-reproduced in B. Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice, 1382–1797* (Aldershot, Hants, 2003).

⁵³ See Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, p. 219.

⁵⁴ Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, p. 215.

substantial reconstruction, little of which was carried out before the end of the Republic.

Although fellow Muslims, the few Persian merchants in Venice tried to avoid living in the Fondaco dei Turchi because of the enmity between Persia and the Ottoman Empire, and they continued to reside in private homes and inns. When in 1662, toward the end of the war of Crete (1645–69), the Venetian government ordered all the Muslims in the city to go to live in the *fondaco*, the six Persian merchants still in Venice decided to leave rather than obey. It had been accepted that the Persians also eventually came to possess their own *fondaco* in Venice. Supposedly located in a building on the Grand Canal almost next to the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, a little further away from the Rialto bridge toward Cannaregio, the number of storage areas contained in its building doubled between 1582 and 1740, presumably by subdivision, and the building that had been described as “dark, uncomfortable and very old” was torn down for hygienic reasons in 1908. However, the most recent scholarship claims that actually the building in question was not an official *fondaco* but, rather, had been owned by private individuals who rented out space to Persians and others.⁵⁵

Additionally, ambassadors with their retinues, pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land, merchants, artisans, casual visitors, and others came to Venice not only from other states on the Italian peninsula but also from other European countries such as France, Spain, England, the Low Countries, Poland, Hungary, and Romania, without in any way forming any permanent identifiable community.⁵⁶

The Venetian sense of the “Other” was also greatly enhanced by the appearance in the city not only of Moors from Barbary but also of a Japanese diplomatic mission that arrived in Venice in 1585 from Portugal. Since its members had expressed a desire to see Venice, the Senate allocated up to 1000 ducats for their expenses. They were received with special honor, and during their brief stay their clothing, nature (*qualità*), and customs were noted, and Tintoretto was commissioned to paint them. In that same year, an Indian mission passed through Venice on its way to Padua. More than 60 years later, in 1652, a Chinese prime minister who had converted to Christianity arrived in Venice with another Chinese, on their way to

⁵⁵ This paragraph is based on Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente*, p. 219.

⁵⁶ See Fedalto, “Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova,” pp. 265–71.

Rome, and in its report to the doge, the Collegio noted that the repute of the Republic was great in China.⁵⁷

VII

The Jews were the most closely controlled and restricted minority in Venice, infidels who for very specific purposes were allowed to reside in the city, from 1516 until the end of the Republic in compulsory, segregated and enclosed quarters, as the Venetian government gradually and grudgingly allowed *raison d'état* to overcome its longstanding policy of religious hostility toward them. Most supervision over Jews was initially granted to two magistracies, the Cattaveri and the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia, and from 1723, to the Inquisitorato sopra gl'Ebrei, which was established in order to assure the solvency of the Jewish community in order to enable it to continue to operate its pawnshops and to repay debts owed to Christians. Additionally, the Collegio, Senate, and other councils and administrative and judicial organs of the Republic frequently concerned themselves with the Jews, leaving very much information for reconstructing their vicissitudes in Venice. Recent scholarship has established that their economic importance as international merchants and moneylenders was greater than previously assumed, as was also their interaction with the surrounding Christian environment, notwithstanding attempts of the government to limit it to the necessary minimum.⁵⁸

Down to the end of the 14th century, apparently only a few Jews dwelled in Venice, while others passed through the city, possibly staying temporarily. Motivated by the Church policy of condemning moneylending at interest among Christians, in 1254 the Venetian government outlawed moneylending at interest, and this may have discouraged Jews from settling.⁵⁹ However, in 1382, as a result of the economic dislocation, shortage of cash, and need for credit resulting from the War of Chioggia against Genoa, the Venetian government, after much consideration, reversed its policy and issued a charter permitting anyone to engage in moneylending

⁵⁷ See Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova," p. 264.

⁵⁸ For a concise history of the Jews of Venice, see B. Ravid, "The Venetian Government and the Jews," in R. C. Davis and B. Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001), pp. 3–30. The other essays in that volume deal with many significant aspects of Jewish life and culture in Venice.

⁵⁹ See R. C. Mueller, *The Procuratori di San Marco and the Venetian Credit Market* (New York, 1977), pp. 229–30, 247–80.

in the city of Venice for the following five years. It appears that the only individuals to respond were Jews, and consequently in 1385 the Senate issued a new charter to go into effect in 1387, good for ten years, allowing them to lend at interest, and in the following year it granted them land on the Lido to use as a cemetery.⁶⁰ However, in 1395, the Senate decreed that upon expiration of the charter in 1397, all Jews were to leave Venice, and henceforth could not remain in the city for longer than 15 days. Then in 1402, alleging that at the end of 15 days they would leave for Mestre and then return for another 15 days, it was provided that after the 15 days had expired, they had to be absent for four months, further extended in 1496 to a whole year. Also, from 1397 on, all Jews in the city were required to wear a distinguishing yellow circle on their outer garment in order to be recognizable as Jews, changed in 1496 to a yellow head-covering to make evasion more difficult.⁶¹

Despite these restrictions, some Jews resided in the city without explicit authorization, and their ranks included doctors, merchants, and *literati*, as well as unidentified individuals who left their traces in archival documents. The Venetian government acknowledged their presence by legislation that sought to control them. To give one significant example, in 1408 it forbade Jews from holding religious services in premises rented from Christian landlords, subject to a year in jail and a fine of 1000 lire for both the Christian landlord and the Jewish tenant, while all other Jews present at the services were to spend six months in jail and pay 300 lire. Subsequently, however, when in 1464 the Jews requested an alleviation of this measure, the Collegio granted their wishes. Pointing out that Pope Pius II (1458–64) had allowed Jews to practice their religion and had threatened with excommunication anyone who forbade them from doing so, it established that henceforth for the honor of God they could freely recite Psalms and praise God according to their laws in the premises that they rented, as long as not more than ten persons (the minimum quorum prescribed by Jewish law for the recitation of certain prayers and the public reading of the Pentateuch) participated. No traces have been found of any

⁶⁰ On the admission of the Jews to Venice and subsequent events down to 1397, see R. Mueller, "Les prêteurs Juifs de Venise au moyen age," *Annales* 30 (1975), 1277–1302, and "The Jewish Moneylenders of Late Trecento Venice: A Revisitation," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10 (1995), 202–17.

⁶¹ See B. Ravid, "From Yellow to Red: On the Distinguishing Head-Covering of the Jews of Venice," *Jewish History* 6 (1992), 179–210, also published in book form with the same pagination in B. Walfish, ed., *Frank Talmage Memorial Volume II* (Hanover, 1992), photo-reproduced in Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice*, 1382–1797.

organized Jewish community or *scuole*, but it is reasonable to assume that some kind of embryonic association or at least *ad hoc* consultation must have existed.⁶²

A major change took place in 1509, as Jews living on the *terraferma* were among the refugees who fled to Venice in the face of the invading armies of the League of Cambrai. Although the Venetian government ordered the refugees to return home after it retook the captured areas, many Jews remained in the city. Eventually, in 1513, realizing that Jewish moneylending was very beneficial since it could provide the hard-pressed treasury with annual payments while assisting the needy urban poor whose numbers had been swelled by the war and obviate their need to borrow illegally from fellow Christians, the government granted two wealthy Jewish moneylenders a five-year charter permitting them to engage in moneylending in Venice. Also, some Jews were authorized to sell second-hand goods known as *strazzaria*, literally rags but, by extension, second-hand clothing and other used items, especially household furnishings that, prior to the industrial revolution when relatively inexpensive mass-produced items first became available, were sought by a large part of the population, as well as foreign diplomats and visitors to the city, and even the government itself for state occasions.

Many Venetians, especially Catholic preachers, were greatly bothered by the new phenomenon of Jews living spread throughout the city. Consequently, in 1516, the Senate required all Jews to live together, segregated and enclosed on the island in Cannaregio already then known as the Ghetto Nuovo (the New Ghetto) because of its association with the municipal copper foundry previously located across the canal, "il ghetto" or "getto" from *gettare* in the sense of pouring or casting metal, whose area came to be known as the Ghetto Vecchio (the Old Ghetto).⁶³ To prevent Jews from moving about the city at night, gates were erected at the two bridges leading out of the Ghetto Nuovo. Christian guards were to open these two gates in the morning when the Marangona bell sounded and close

⁶² For further details on the Jews in 15th-century Venice, see B. Ravid, "The Legal Status of the Jews of Venice to 1509," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 54 (1987), 169–202.

⁶³ For the definitive reconstruction of the history of the area of the ghetto before it was assigned to the Jews and the immediate course of events afterward, see E. Concina, "Parva Jerusalem," in E. Concina, V. Camerino, and D. Calabi, *La città degli Ebrei: Il ghetto di Venezia: Architettura e urbanistica* (Venice, 1991), p. 1149; for a brief English summary, see Ravid, "The Venetian Government and the Jews," pp. 7–10. See also Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 338–39.

them, initially at sunset but then slightly extended to one hour after dark in summer and two in winter; only Jewish doctors, and later merchants, were routinely allowed outside after curfew time, while permission to do so was occasionally granted upon special request to other individuals, but almost never—with the exception primarily of a few doctors—was a Jew authorized to stay outside all night.⁶⁴

Although the Jews tried to avoid moving to the ghetto, overall the institution of the ghetto constituted a positive step mediating between their former state of non-authorized presence and the newer brief reality of unrestricted residence throughout the city, as it represented the compromise that recognized the legitimacy of their residence in the city but carefully controlled their presence in it. Yet the existence of the ghetto did not assure the continued residence of the Jews in Venice, for that privilege was based on the five-year charter of 1513. Consequently, upon its expiration in 1518, the Senate took up the issue of its renewal, leading to very sharp differences of opinion on the question of what to do with the Jews.⁶⁵ Ultimately, socio-economic *raison d'état* triumphed over traditional religious hostility, and the charter of the Jewish moneylenders was renewed, from 1548 on for five-year periods, and in retrospect, they were to remain in the city to the end of the Republic.⁶⁶

The charters set forth the basic laws governing the residence of the Jews in the city and especially their pawnbroking, usually referred to somewhat misleadingly as moneylending since the full Italian name for the establishment in which the transactions took place was *banco* (plural: *banchi*) *di pegni* [bank of pawns], which was shortened to *banco* or *banchi*, with the result that their owners and managers were often referred to as *banchieri* (bankers) rather than *prestatori* or *feneratori* (moneylenders), or more accurately, pawnbrokers. The basic provisions of the charters were supplemented by many additional laws enacted by the major legislative Venetian councils and regulations issued by numerous administrative bodies.

⁶⁴ See Ravid, "Curfew Time in the Ghetto of Venice."

⁶⁵ Excerpts in English translation in Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 488–98; and R. Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 39–43. See also B. Ravid, "On Sufferance and Not As Of Right: The Status of the Jewish Communities in Early-Modern Venice," in D. Malkiel, ed., *The Lion Shall Roar: Leon Modena and his World, Italia: Conference Supplement Series*, 1 (Jerusalem, 2003), pp. 20–24.

⁶⁶ See Ravid, "On Sufferance," pp. 25–43.

The pawnshops, initially privately run profit-making businesses, became much less lucrative as the government increasingly utilized the Jews as providers of inexpensive credit for the Venetian poor rather than as contributors to the treasury. Consequently, during the course of the 16th century, it gradually lowered the interest rates from 15 per cent to 12 to ten and finally to five per cent in 1573 and required the Jews to lend sums of up to three ducats if given an adequate pledge. At the same time, in response to repeated Jewish complaints that the lower interest rates were eliminating their profits, the government lowered their annual payments to the treasury until finally those payments were completely eliminated when the interest rate was reduced to five percent. Thus the nature of Jewish pawnbroking changed from a private profit-making enterprise to the equivalent of a Monte di Pietà subsidized by the Jewish community that, in order to enable the Jews to continue to reside in Venice, had to assume responsibility for the operation of three pawnshops and to grant the Jews who operated them a subsidy by augmenting the economically unviable five per cent interest rate on all sums lent out.⁶⁷

The Venetian-Ottoman war of 1537–40 led to the diversion of much of the maritime trade of Venice to Ancona, so when in 1541 Levantine Jewish merchants came to the government complaining that they did not have space to dwell in the ghetto because of its narrowness and requested that they be provided with adequate room, the government responded favorably. Observing that the greater part of the merchandise coming from Upper and Lower Romania was handled by those merchants, in the context of a larger plan designed to make trading in Venice more attractive to foreign merchants, it assigned them 20 dwellings in the Ghetto Vecchio, which was ordered walled up with a gate at each end, one opening up to the pavement along the canal of Cannaregio and the other to the wooden footbridge leading to the Ghetto Nuovo.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, at the end of the 15th century a major demographic change commenced. As a result of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and the continual emigration of New Christians who had been converted by force in Portugal in 1497 and their descendents, a far-flung kinship network of Jews and New Christians gradually came into being throughout the Mediterranean world, especially in its eastern coastal port cities, such as Istanbul and Salonika. Simultaneously, the eastern Mediterranean, the

⁶⁷ Ravid, "On Sufferance," pp. 25–43.

⁶⁸ See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, p. 344.

Balkans, and North Africa were being consolidated in the hands of the Ottoman Empire, and as a result Ottoman subjects, including Ottoman Jews, an undetermined number of whom were of Iberian origin, came to play an increasingly significant role in Mediterranean commerce.

Venice constituted an especially attractive destination for judaizing New Christians desiring to leave the Iberian peninsula. Since it was a major port with ships frequently leaving for the Ottoman Empire, it served as a convenient point of embarkation for those wishing to depart for the Ottoman East. Also, the Jewish community, segregated in the ghetto, offered an opportunity for New Christians to learn more about Judaism and even to revert or to convert to Judaism. Above all, although in 1547 an Inquisition, presided over by the papal nuncio with the participation of the patriarch and the three members of the lay magistracy of the *Tre Savii sopra Heresia* representing the government, was revived in Venice, its purpose was primarily to deal with the growth of Protestant heresy rather than with judaizing New Christians as had been the case on the Iberian peninsula. Furthermore, it generally did not actively search for New Christians who, upon arriving in Venice, went directly to the ghetto and there assumed Judaism and henceforth lived unambiguously as Jews, especially if they were active as international maritime merchants.⁶⁹ Yet it did not tolerate those who lived outside the ghetto and passed themselves off as Christians while secretly judaizing and maintaining close contacts with Jews in the ghetto who on occasion were relatives, both because such conduct was an affront to Christianity and also because it was feared that they might lead simple Venetian Christians astray.

Commencing in 1573, the Portuguese-born Jewish entrepreneur Daniel Rodriga sought from the Venetian government privileges not only for Levantine (eastern) Jewish merchants but also for New Christian merchants living on the Iberian peninsula, whom he called Ponentine (western) Jews.⁷⁰ The designation "Ponentine Jews" constituted a neutral circumlocution, indeed euphemism, possibly formulated by Rodriga and accepted by the Venetian government in order to avoid anything that

⁶⁹ For an introduction to the Inquisition in Venice and its treatment of Jews and judaizing New Christians, see P. C. Ioly Zorattini, "Jews, Crypto-Jews and the Inquisition," in Davis and Ravid, *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, pp. 97–116.

⁷⁰ On Rodriga and the Jewish merchants of Venice to the end of the Republic, see B. Ravid, "An Introduction to the Charters of the Jewish Merchants of Venice," in E. Horowitz and M. Orfali, eds., *The Mediterranean and the Jews II: Society, Culture and Economy in Early Modern Times* (Ramat Gan, 2002), pp. 207–46, photo-reproduced in Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice*.

might allude to the New Christian background of the merchants. For at least 30 years, until his death in 1603, he submitted, with indefatigable zeal, a steady stream of projects and proposals to the Venetian government. Central were his two basic major interrelated projects, apparently first proposed in late 1576 or early 1577 but ultimately implemented only after 1589: first, the establishment of a free-transit port at Spalato (Split), then a Venetian possession on the Dalmatian Adriatic coast; and second, the granting of a charter conferring extensive commercial privileges throughout the Venetian state to Jewish merchants who, he envisioned, would play a major role in developing trade between Venice and Spalato by virtue of their extensive kinship networks. It was his conviction that they would enable Venice to maintain its entrepôt function and enhance its customs revenue in the face of increasingly serious commercial difficulties resulting from the gradual shift in maritime trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, the increased presence of the ships of England, France, and Spain in the Eastern Mediterranean ports, and the shift of Venetian patricians from trade to other economic activities.

As a result of Rodriga's persistent lobbying, in 1589 the Venetian government accepted his utilitarian considerations of commercial *raison d'état* as constituting the least objectionable way to remedy the decline in Venetian maritime commerce and adopted his proposal to issue a charter inviting Iberian New Christian merchants to settle with their families in the Venetian state, with immediate privileges of engaging in trade between Venice and the Levant, rather than the usual 25-year waiting period, and of paying the same customs rates as native and naturalized Venetian merchants.⁷¹ However, in order to avoid religious ambiguity and also the precedent of allowing non-native Christians to engage in trade between Venice and the Levant without a lengthy waiting period, these Iberian New Christians were required to assume Judaism upon their arrival in Venice, and to go directly to reside in the ghetto under the designation of Ponentine Jews, with the assurance that they would not be molested on account of religion by any magistracy. At the same time, this charter also invited Levantine Jewish merchants, who previously had been supposed to stay only briefly in the city on their own in order to complete their commercial business, to settle in the city with their families with the same commercial privileges as the Ponentine Jews. Although issued for a limited ten-year period, this charter was to be renewed periodically

⁷¹ See Chambers and Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 346–49.

down to 1711, and its provisions were to remain in effect until the end of the Venetian Republic.

While Levantine Jewish merchants already enjoyed the privilege of engaging in the Levant trade by virtue of the treaties between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, the extension of this privilege to Ponentine Jews was especially noteworthy from both the commercial and religious vantage points. In 1586, the only Venetians legally allowed to engage in trade between Venice and the Levant, the patricians and the *cittadini* (both *originari* and *de intus et de extra* but not *de intus*), constituted 4.3 per cent and less than 5.1 per cent respectively of the population.⁷² Thus, the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants possessed rights to which more than 90 per cent of the Venetian Christian population could never aspire. Moreover, they were not subject to the waiting period of 25 years that applied to all Christian non-Venetians who desired the privilege of engaging in the Levant trade. This unprecedented concession reversed a policy that had been established since the 14th century and serves as clear testimony to the Venetian perception of the importance of the Jewish merchants. However, it should be noted that the privileges granted to the Jewish merchants were less generous than the rights enjoyed by the Venetian nobility, *cittadini originarii*, and citizens *de intus* and *de intus et de extra*, for they did not confer any rights of citizenship within Venice, which meant that the Jewish merchants could not purchase real estate or engage in trade within the city.

Understandably, this charter issued more than 30 years after the start of the hostile counter-reformation attitude toward the Jews and the reversion of New Christians to Judaism constituted a challenge to the new counter-reformation papal mentality that rejected the previous permissive papal attitude toward the reversion of New Christians to Judaism.⁷³ The Venetian ambassador to Rome, Alberto Badoer, in a report sent to Venice in June 1591, related that the pope had called the charter of 1589 a detestable and unprecedented action that could not be tolerated and had expressed his hope that the Venetian government would revoke it. Badoer unsympathetically responded that there was no doubt that the charter

⁷² See D. Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia dalla fine del Secolo XVI alla caduta della Repubblica* (Padua, 1954), p. 72.

⁷³ On this paragraph and the following two, see B. Ravid, "Venice, Rome, and the Reversion of Conversos to Judaism: A Study in *Ragione di Stato*," in P. C. Ioly Zorattini, ed., *L'identità dissimulata: giudaizzanti iberici nell'europa cristiana dell'età moderna* (Florence, 2000), pp. 151–93, photo-reproduced in Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice*.

was to be praised, for granting the Ponentine Jews the same privileges as the Levantines, with the similar obligation to live in the ghetto and wear the special head-covering, was for the benefit of Venice and prevented them from going with their great wealth to the hostile Ottoman Empire, as they did annually in great numbers, an argument that later was to be repeated by Paolo Sarpi. Leonardo Donà, later to become doge, was to justify Venetian policy in the face of strong criticism from the papal nuncio by claiming that it was better that judaizing New Christians reverted to Judaism and dwelled in the ghetto rather than among Christians, frequenting the churches, and taking the sacraments in a spirit of falsehood, thus bringing dishonor to God and scandal to the city.

The charter was subsequently renewed for further ten-year periods, to the constant dismay of the papacy. Given the Venetian approach of *raison d'état*, especially when its key concern of Mediterranean maritime trade was involved, and the new attitude of the counter-reformation papacy toward crypto-Jews and New Christians who reverted to Judaism, it is certainly very understandable that among the differences that arose between the Venetian Republic and the papacy, that of proceeding against Jews and crypto-Jews certainly would be almost unsurmountable. Indeed, a document entitled *Raccolta di alcuni negozi spettanti alla santa Inquisizione nelle città e Dominio veneto dal principio di Clemente VIII sino al principio del mese di luglio MDCXXV*, written around 1625, contained a section entitled "On Proceeding against Jews and Marranos" that commenced with the observation that among the differences which at various times had arisen between the Inquisition and the Venetian Republic, almost always unsurmountable was that of proceeding against Jews and Marranos.

Understandably, non-Venetian Christian merchants resented having to reside in the city continuously for 25 years before they could become citizens *de intus et de extra*. On one occasion, in 1610, a lengthy and carefully thought-out memorandum was submitted by Paul Santonini, a Venetian notary who had served various magistracies for 30 years.⁷⁴ Well aware of the special status of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants, Santonini referred to them several times, specifically mentioning their charter of 1589, its renewal in 1598, and several of its provisions. He argued that if the privileges of trade with the Levant and payment of the customs at the

⁷⁴ I plan to elaborate further on the following course of events, and also two other attempts of foreign Christian merchants to obtain permission to engage in maritime trade between Venice and the Levant in my forthcoming history of the Jews of Venice. In the interim, see Zannini, *Venezia città aperta*, pp. 116–18.

lower rate reserved for Venetians had been granted to those Jewish merchants, how much more so should they also be granted to Christian Venetian subjects living on the *terraferma* and to foreigners from all places. He again invoked the Jews to justify his proposal to admit foreigners to the Levant trade, as he pointed out reassuringly that since for 25 years the foreigners would pay higher customs duties than did the Venetians and the Jews, they would be in the disadvantaged position of having to sell their goods at a higher price. The memorandum of Santonini was supported by the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia, who pointed out that granting Greeks, Muslims, and Jews not only freedom of maritime trade but also payment of the customs at the same rate as Venetian subjects had turned out to be very profitable, because currently those merchants were paying a great part of the customs revenue received by the government from that merchandise. The issue was hotly debated on the Senate floor. Nicolò Donà, a proponent of the liberalizing bill, rejected the argument that non-Catholics should not be admitted to trade in Venice. He pointed out that foreigners, although of different religions and customs, had never been abhorred, citing as evidence the Fondaco dei Tedeschi and the presence of Ottomans, Jews, Marranos, and all other nations. Apparently because the Senate was very sharply divided, no changes were made in the highly protective Venetian commercial system, and the Jews retained their unique status of being able to become “instant merchants” of Venice.

Unlike other minorities, the Jews did not need to establish a *scuola* in order to have a focal point for the maintenance of their identity, for their institutions in the compulsory, segregated, and enclosed ghetto served that purpose. Aptly characterized as “the city of the Jews,”⁷⁵ the ghetto was the designated area in which virtually all aspects of the life of the Jews took place. Notwithstanding its generally restrictive legislation vis-à-vis the Jews, as long as the Venetian government was unwilling to establish a Monte di Pietà, retaining the Jewish moneylenders constituted the most expedient alternative to officially avoid the practice of Christians lending money to fellow Christians. To retain Jewish moneylenders as well as to attract Jewish merchants to Venice, it was necessary not only to enable them to survive physically and economically but also to assure them that they could practice their religion freely. Commencing in 1528, the charters of the Tedeschi Jews established the basic principle that they

⁷⁵ As in the title of Concina, Camerino, and Calabi, *La città degli Ebrei*, and D. Calabi, “The ‘City of the Jews,’” in Davis and Ravid, *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, pp. 31–49.

could live according to their rites and customs, and conferred upon them many specific derivative rights. Thus, they were allowed "to maintain their synagogue according to custom" and to bury their dead on the Lido. The charters of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants additionally guaranteed them security from molestation for reasons of religion by any magistracy, certainly a very necessary provision needed to reassure former New Christians who were living openly as Jews in the Ghetto. The favorable approach of the Venetian government extended also to other matters. For example, it opposed the baptism of Jewish minors under the age of 14 without the consent of their parents. Furthermore, compulsory conversionary sermons were never introduced in Venice, and a clause that prohibited forcing Jews to attend them was incorporated into the charter of 1777.⁷⁶

In addition to five major synagogues (significantly called *scuole*) and at least three minor ones, the ghetto also contained stores that sold kosher food as well as other items that the Jews needed for their everyday life.⁷⁷ The Jewish community was highly organized, with each of its "nations" (the Italian-German, Levantine, and Spanish-Portuguese) establishing its own council; also, a super-council was formed to take care of community-wide needs and serve as liaison with the Venetian government. The Jews also formed their own confraternities for specific religious purposes such as the study of the law, dawn prayers, and generally pursuing the commandments, as well as caring for the dying and the dead, dowering brides, and providing money, clothing, food, and firewood for the poor.⁷⁸

Yet while the Jews were indeed granted freedom of religious observance and practice of their traditions, their general personal freedom and economic rights were far more restricted than were those of other minority groups residing in Venice, with the notable exception of the special privilege of engaging in the Levant trade. Everything that was not specifically permitted to them was supposedly forbidden. Above all, despite the retrospective continuity of their residence in the city from 1509 to the end of the Republic, on occasion their fate was hanging in the balance as the Senate either failed to renew the charter on the first ballot or decreed an expulsion, although none was ever actually implemented,

⁷⁶ For further details, see Ravid, "On Suffrance," pp. 54–57.

⁷⁷ See Calabi, "Il Ghetto e la città," in Concina, Camerino, and Calabi, *La città degli Ebrei*, pp. 203–300; and Calabi, "The 'City of the Jews,'" pp. 31–49.

⁷⁸ See D. Malkiel, "The Ghetto Republic," in Davis and Ravid, *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, pp. 117–42.

thereby highlighting the insecurity that was always hanging over a community that resided in Venice on sufferance, not by right.

Yet the Jews clearly thought of themselves not as foreigners but as Venetians. At least two significant Renaissance and early modern Jewish writers considered the government of the Venetian Republic to represent the ideal type of government as set forth in the Old Testament, while others saw the affirmation of a key aspect of the Myth of Venice, the righteousness of the laws of the city and the sense of justice of its government, in the Venetian treatment of the Jews in its midst.⁷⁹

Still, no matter what privileges the Jews possessed, they always constituted the Other who inhabited a separate space, and no matter how much concern the government took to apply the due process of law to all matters involving them, their status never was—and never could be—the same as that of other native inhabitants of the city. Their situation conformed to the Catholic policy initially formulated by Pope Gregory I and subsequently reiterated by medieval popes, although not so often observed in practice, which asserted that while the Jews ought not to claim more than what was permitted to them by law, nonetheless those rights that had been granted to them were to be observed. Venice felt that the status quo represented a desirable compromise between complete rejection and full acceptance that ought to be fairly maintained and only modified in accordance with the due process of the law.

VIII

It can be concluded that the Venetian government not only tolerated the presence of minorities in its midst but also actively encouraged them to come to the city, and on occasion even offered them attractive concessions if it thought that they could in some way be of economic or commercial benefit. Yet, while giving them much freedom, the government carefully controlled the activities of minorities in areas that it considered important, especially in maintaining a monopoly of the Levant trade for its own citizens, in preventing customs fraud, and in preserving the Catholic faith of the city.

⁷⁹ See B. Ravid, "Between the Myth of Venice and the Lachrymose Conception of Jewish History: The Case of the Jews of Venice," in B. Cooperman and B. Garvin, eds., *The Jews of Italy: Memory and Identity* (Bethesda, MD, 2000), pp. 151–92, photo-reproduced in Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice*.

Given the potent combination of religious, political, and military considerations, Ottoman Muslims were especially disliked and suspected. Somewhat unexpectedly, the position of the Jews was, in certain respects, comparatively more favorable than that of non-Catholic Christian groups, despite the strict segregation, special head-covering, and severe civil restrictions imposed upon them. Brian Pullan observed that in Venice "the Jews were more highly privileged than any other community of religious aliens, with the sole exception of Greeks adhering to the Union of Florence"; thus Jews could openly have synagogues which Christians could and did visit,⁸⁰ while Protestants "could expect only liberty of conscience, as distinct from freedom of public worship, and seize the chance to attend an embassy chapel."⁸¹ Indeed, only in 1657 did the Protestant merchants from the Germanic lands who resided in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi receive permission to hold religious services privately in the *fondaco* and to bring pastors from Germany. As Frederic Lane noted, "no organized Protestant propaganda was permitted, and Protestantism was tolerated only marginally as an intellectual plaything of a few skeptics and as the religious custom of a few foreigners: the German merchants in their *fondaco*, a flourishing colony of German bakers, and the many German students at Padua."⁸² Summarizing the situation in the late 17th century, Maximilien Misson observed that in Venice, the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were allowed the public exercise of their religion, while all other sects or religions were tolerated, but one pretended not to know about their meetings, which were held in so secret and discrete a manner that the Senate did not have any reason to complain about any abuse or indiscretion. Further, in the course of asserting that Protestants could be buried in the churches if their relatives desired it because one ignored that there were Protestants in Venice, Misson claimed that all those who were neither Jews nor Greeks nor Armenians were deemed to be Catholics.⁸³ As Lane concluded, "Venice was far from being any champion of freedom of thought in principle [...] But men of a great variety of views succeeded one way or another in living in Venice pretty much as they pleased, and

⁸⁰ See B. Ravid, "Christian Travelers in the Ghetto of Venice: Some Preliminary Observations," in S. Nash, ed., *Between History and Literature: Studies in Honor of Isaac Barzilai* (B'nei B'rak, 1997), pp. 111–50, photo-reproduced in Ravid, *Studies on the Jews of Venice*.

⁸¹ See B. Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice* (Oxford, 1983), p. 154.

⁸² See Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, p. 395.

⁸³ See M. Misson, *A New Voyage to Italy* (London, 1739), vol. 1, book 2, p. 484, repr. in Ravid, "Christian Travelers in the Ghetto of Venice," pp. 132–33.

thinking as they pleased, so long as they did not attack the government.”⁸⁴ Most significantly, Marino Berengo characterized the Venetian attitude toward non-Catholic religions as one of indifference and not of official toleration. The Venetian government did not proclaim the freedom and equality of religions. Rather, it gave tacit consent for foreigners to practice their own religion privately, without harming Catholicism, because of the necessity to have foreign merchants in the city; but it strictly forbade both proselytism on behalf of the tolerated denominations as well as anti-Catholic propaganda.⁸⁵ Here once again, as in so many other areas, *raison d'état* ruled the day, even to the extent of defying the papacy, in accordance with the dictum that *prima semo Veneziani, poi cristiani* (We are first Venetians, then Christians), as minorities contributed to the perseverance of the Most Serene Republic in the face of the difficulties that it confronted over the centuries.

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⁸⁴ See Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, p. 395.

⁸⁵ See M. Berengo, *La società veneta alla fine del settecento; ricerche storiche* (Florence, 1956), pp. 172–73.

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THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF VENICE

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What could an anthropology of Renaissance Venice possibly be? Certainly one can no longer assume there was any comprehensive, single Venetian point of view, a universally Venetian way of finding meaning and constructing reality.¹ Venetian men and women, nuns and prostitutes, senators and Arsenal workers did not look at the world in the same way or assume life meant the same thing, no matter how monolithic Venetian political culture may have been. Never isolated despite the fact it was built on islands, cosmopolitan Venice was one of the first places in Europe connected to a Mediterranean and Eurasian system of exchange, making it the hinge of the nascent world system of the later Middle Ages.² In fact, Venice only existed as a metropolis because its location made it an ideal entrepôt, a convenient place between other places. Not only were many Venetians, like Marco Polo, world travelers but also foreigners were always visiting and residing in Venice—the French, Flemings, Slavs, Albanians, Armenians, other Italians, and especially Germans, Greeks, and Jews. Any attempt to define an anthropology of Venice, therefore, must be partial, fragmentary, and at best suggestive.³ An anthropology of Venice must seek meaning from the dialogues of encounters: the encounter of official Venetian political culture with the other cultures co-existing in the great cosmopolitan city and the encounter of Venetians with their *terraferma* and maritime subjects with the wider world.⁴ These recurrent encounters projected themselves onto a Venetian cultural screen, creating whatever it was that was distinctively Venetian in the religiously and ethnically diverse Mediterranean world.⁵

¹ Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981) sometimes verges on doing just that.

² William H. McNeill, *Venice: The Hinge of Europe, 1081–1797* (Chicago, 1974).

³ James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," in James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 1–27.

⁴ Elizabeth Horodowich, *Language and Statecraft in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge, 2008) pp. 78–79.

⁵ The historical anthropology of Venice has blossomed since the late 1970s. The most influential work has been Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge, 1987). Significant studies that might

Of course, anthropology itself (or, more properly, ethnography) is no longer engaged in the search for the isolated primitive or the distinctively local. As George E. Marcus has argued, the ethnography appropriate to the global capitalist system of today, whether based on a single locality or multiple sites, requires the integration of ethnographic observations into the global realities that impinge on all localities. "Resulting ethnographies are therefore both in and out of the world system." The new ethnography devotes itself to "a concern with the dynamics of encapsulation, focused on the relationships, language, and objects of encounter and response from the perspectives of local and cosmopolitan groups and persons who, although in different relative power positions, experience a process of being mutually displaced from what has counted as culture for each

be classified as ecological anthropologies include Alberto Tenenti, *Venezia e il senso del mare: storia di un prisma culturale dal XIII al XVIII secolo* (Milan, 1999); Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, "Sopra le acque salse": *espaces, pouvoir et société à Venise à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Rome, 1992); Crouzet-Pavan, *La mort lente de Torcello: histoire d'une cité disparue* (Paris, 1995); and Karl Richard Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea: Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2009). Historical anthropologies that take a social and cultural turn include Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*; Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1993); Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists: Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1994); Robert C. Davis and Garry R. Marvin, *Venice, the Tourist Maze: A Cultural Critique of the World's Most Touristed City* (Berkeley, 2004); Claudio Povolo, *L'intrigo dell'Onore: Poteri e istituzioni nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Verona, 1997); Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago, 1999); Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001); Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore, 2000); Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1993); and Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore, 2001). The most recent work concentrates on identity, gender, and cultural mediation: Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2006); Dursteler, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2011); John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Houndmills, 2004); Joanne M. Ferraro, *Nefarious Crimes, Contested Justice: Illicit Sex and Infanticide in the Republic of Venice, 1557–1789* (Baltimore, 2008); Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007); Horodowich, *Language and Statecraft in Early Modern Venice*; Laura McGough, *The Disease that Came to Stay: Gender, Sexuality and the French Disease in Early Modern Venice* (Basingstoke, 2010); Dennis Romano, *The Likeness of Venice: A Life of Doge Francesco Foscarini, 1373–1457* (New Haven, 2007); Holly Hurlburt, *The Dogaresa of Venice, 1200–1500: Wife and Icon* (New York, 2006); Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009); Ella-Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, 2011); and James H. Johnson, *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic* (Berkeley, 2011).

of them.”⁶ A historical ethnography of Renaissance Venice would attempt to look something like this formulation. It would search for the multiple forms of meaning suggested by the recurrent displacements created by Venice’s precarious position in the shifting global economic and state system that stretched far beyond its own realm of political control or cultural understanding. Such an ethnography would take account not just of persistent verities of place but also of the vagaries of change over time.

The Participant Observer

One might start that search with Venice’s most famous native participant-observer, Marin Sanudo (Marino Sanuto; 1466–1536), the most prolific memorialist of the Italian Renaissance. Sanudo worked his way up the *cursus honorum* of Venetian public life, but in mid-life the highest honors escaped him because he refused to serve abroad where he would be out of the action in Venice. Away from Venice he could not keep track of the news so readily available on the Rialto and in the halls of the Ducal Palace. His career stalled as a backbench senator, but his offices placed him in a singular position to observe and record in his diaries (1496–1533) the events not just of Venice but of much of Europe: “Everything I have seen and heard I have written down.”⁷ He used every source of information he could find from diplomatic reports to Senate debates, and he strived to hear every bit of gossip by intruding into conversations of others and by arriving at the Ducal Palace early each morning to catch the latest news. He recorded all this information in his vibrant if often syntactically obscure Venetian vernacular, which he thought came closer to the truth of lived experience than Latin or Tuscan. For Sanudo, the directness of Venetian, the language of daily life employed with both other senators and household servants, gave historical truth to his narratives; and as a guide to the anthropology of Venice, his prose supplies a linguistically unfiltered source for the meanings of Venetian culture.⁸ Sanudo, however, was far

⁶ George E. Marcus, “Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995), 95, 96. Marcus’s primary exposition of the new ethnography is “Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System,” in James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 165–93.

⁷ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Rulin et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1903), 5:1066.

⁸ See the editors’ and translator’s comments on Sanudo’s language in Patricia H. Labalme and Laura Sanguineti White, eds., Linda L. Carroll, trans., Marin Sanudo, *Città*

from an objective observer if there ever is such a person. Self-absorbed and ambitious, intensely conservative and respectful of authority, Sanudo was a Venetian insider who often felt like an outsider, someone mistreated by Fortune and by the failure of others to recognize his merits. However, because he was more a collector of other people's information than an original thinker or creative author, he provides an irreplaceable window into the multiple dimensions of meaning in late 15th- and early 16th-century Venice.

Long before he began his diaries, Marin accompanied in 1483 his uncle Marco and two other patricians, who were serving as *auditori nuovi* to hear appeals to sentences delivered by local judges, on a six-month journey throughout the Venetian mainland and Istria. The seventeen-year-old Marin kept an account of what he saw, revealing an obsession with details that later made his famous 58-volume diary a kind of Renaissance ethnography. He cultivated the traveler's eye and played the politician in the making that he was. As he visited each town, Marin checked off a list of distinctive traits, describing the fortifications, walls, gates, markets, rivers, and churches. He discussed the regular fairs, navigability of water courses, damages inflicted by Turkish raids, patron saints, and miracle working images. He listed the salaries and responsibilities of the governors, *rettori*, *capitani*, and *podestà*. He picked up a little local history and, consistent with the priorities of his humanist education, dutifully transcribed every Latin inscription he found.⁹

The Friulan "Other"

For each town he noted the jurisdictional complexities of the place because jurisdictions constituted the real presence of Venetian authority within the *terraferma* dominion. The most idiosyncratic culture Marin encountered was in Friuli, the least urbanized region in the Venetian dominion, indeed in northern Italy. To the Venetians, the Friulans were inscrutable and hostile to strangers because of recurrent invasions and incessant feuds. An impoverished, arid region divided into rugged Alps and a broad malarial plain, Friuli was inhabited by a people who practiced

Excelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo (Baltimore, 2008), pp. xx–xxi.

⁹ Marino Sanuto, *Itinerario per la Terraferma veneziana nell'anno MCCCCLXXXIII* (Padua, 1847).

customs alien to the Venetians.¹⁰ Everywhere in Italy dialects divided people by locality and by class, but in Friuli linguistic diversity was pronounced. There were a few German- and seventy-three Slovene-speaking villages, which constituted a significant linguistic minority. Even within the majority Friulan population there were distinctive linguistic strata. The mass of uneducated peasants and artisans spoke only Friulan, which was indecipherable to outsiders and did not give its native speakers easy access to Italian. Some better-educated peasants, such as the now-famous heretic miller Menocchio, knew Veneto, which allowed them to read Italian books.¹¹ Only a tiny group of the highly educated knew Tuscan and/or Latin. In his 1484 translation into the vernacular of the *Constitutions of the Patria of Friuli*, the humanist Pietro Capretto analyzed the linguistic problem of the appropriate vernacular for Friuli. He wanted to choose a language that would be accessible to most of the people who might need to consult the constitutions. He rejected both Tuscan, because "it is too obscure to the Friulan people," and Friulan, because "not everyone speaks it in Friuli and because it is hard to write and understand, read, and pronounce, especially by those who do not know the Friulan vocabulary and accent."¹² Thus, unlike the cosmopolitan Venetians, whose language had become the *lingua franca* of merchants across the Mediterranean, the isolated Friulans could not even communicate effectively with one another.

At La Motta di Livenza, the first Friulan town the Sanudo party visited, Marin described the small castle and 50 cottages around it. Outside the walls there were 31 villages under La Motta's jurisdiction—16 under the laws of Treviso, 15 under those of Friuli. Here is one of the first clues to the complexities of the political anthropology of Friuli. The itinerant *auditori nuovi*, who were politicians untrained in law, faced a mission fraught with contradictions. Venice itself employed what the late Gaetano Cozzi called "oracular law," which paid little attention either to statute or precedent and was highly subject to political calculations and graft.¹³

¹⁰ Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*, p. 16; Edward Muir, "La Patria del Friuli e della Repubblica di Venezia," in Caroline Callard, Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, and Alain Tallon, eds., *Usage de l'histoire et pratiques politiques en Italie, du Moyen Age aux temps modernes: autour de la notion de réemploi* (Paris, forthcoming).

¹¹ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore, 1980).

¹² *Costituzioni della Patria del Friuli nel volgarizzamento di Pietro Capretto del 1484 e nell'edizione latina del 1565*, ed. Anna Gobessi and Ermanno Orlando, intro. study Giorgio Zordan (Rome, 1998), pp. 103–04.

¹³ Gaetano Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia e stati italiani: Politica e giustizia dal secolo XVI al secolo XVIII* (Turin, 1982), pp. 217–318.

Venice's subject towns on the *terraferma*, in contrast, had their own statutes, which, unlike Venice's, derived from Lombard and Roman law. Marin's uncle and his two companions arrived in La Motta to hear appeals of cases based on two different statutes, those of Treviso and Friuli, but they were in La Motta for only a few days, which forced them to rely on the local experts, the attorneys and notaries. Despite their responsibility to guarantee uniform principles of justice, the *auditori* were at the mercy of the very people they were obliged to regulate.¹⁴ Here was the classic dilemma faced by the European colonialists and missionaries who invented modern anthropology: in order to rule more effectively, they sought understanding through systematic observation of a subjected people whose culture was utterly alien. But to do that they had to rely heavily on local informants and local mediators who were by no means naïve windows into an alien culture, and because the information came through the medium of judicial review, the very presence of the Venetians in Friuli distorted the phenomenon Marin was trying to observe.

Marco Sanudo's task drew him into the labyrinth of local jurisdictions that his nephew Marin catalogued. In Udine, Marin's party arrived in Friuli's only real city, the center of Friulan administration and of Venetian influence in the region. From here the Venetian *luogotenente* and his subordinate officials governed a city of 15,000 and 66 other jurisdictions, but "governed" is a deceptive word here. Each of the 66 jurisdictions had its own customary privileges and procedures, its own formal and informal distribution of power, its own relationship with superior authority. Behind these jurisdictional complexities lurked the shadow government of the factions—those who followed the populist Savorgnan family, who were allied to the Venetians, and those who followed the great aristocratic families (the *castellani*). "I saw," Marin reported, "in some streets chains that could close them off to those [from the enemy faction] not allowed to pass."¹⁵ From these chains the startled young Marin began to understand something of a feuding culture, a place very different from Venice's non-violent, merchant-dominated, consensus-based electoral polity.

Once the party arrived in Cividale, Marin began to identify the borders between Venice and the Holy Roman Empire, which cut through Friuli. "Outside the gate of Cividale was a stream . . . , which it is said divides Italy

¹⁴ Ceferino Caro Lopez, "Gli auditori nuovi e il dominio di terraferma," in Gaetano Cozzi, ed., *Stato, società e giustizia*, 2 vols (Rome, 1980), 1:259–316.

¹⁵ Sanuto, *Itinerario*, pp. 133–34.

from Slovenia; hence, I was finally at the end of Italy." For Marin and his local informants, borders mattered a great deal. Where there were no natural borders, such as rivers or streams, the Venetians erected insignia defining what was theirs, as they did at the town of Corno di Rosazzo with a pilaster painting of St Mark. Venice in Friuli was a regime of weak central institutions but strong geographical coordinates. People knew exactly what was where. Whatever else constituted Venetian political practice, there was a deep sensitivity toward exactly what territories were Venice's and where one jurisdictional regime ended and another began.¹⁶

The Uncanny

The calamities that followed the French invasion of Italy in 1494 stimulated Sanudo to begin a systematic record of his times, which he began with his first diary entry on 1 January 1496. Throughout the diaries Sanudo recorded evidence of the uncanny: omens, miracles, providential signs, monstrous births, spirits, and witches. Sanudo's own attitude toward these varied. He reported without skepticism those that seemed to point to the role of Venice in God's providential scheme, especially during the most difficult phases of the War of the League of Cambrai from 1509 to 1517. The most elaborate omen came from reports of vaporous visions of a combat among dead spirits on the battlefield of Agnadello, where the Venetian forces had been routed in May 1509. These visions, which Sanudo dutifully recorded, transformed a folk myth of uncertain origin about armies of the dead into a prophecy, which was later adapted for a papal propaganda campaign. The Agnadello visions became paradigmatic of the floating-up of a cultural motif from peasants to the highest intellectual circles in Europe.¹⁷ The anthropology of Venice was not just a trickle-down of elites interpreting non-elites but a culture of interpenetrating idioms.

For Sanudo, the dominant interpretive frame for omens remained the contemporary political situation. After the French took Bergamo from

¹⁶ Sanuto, *Itinerario*, p. 139. On the problem of Venice's borders with the Empire, Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea*, pp. 110, 174–75, 294–302. Cf. Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*, pp. 30, 58–60. A case I have studied elsewhere, the murder of Federico di Strassoldo in 1561, reveals the importance of precise boundaries in Friuli. See also Edward Muir, "The Double Binds of Manly Revenge," in Richard C. Trexler, ed., *Gender Rhetorics: Postures of Dominance and Submission in Human History* (Binghamton, 1994), pp. 72–73.

¹⁷ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 10:48–49. Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, 1990), pp. 61–88.

the Venice in 1509, they absconded with a large gilded statue of the doge kneeling before the lion of St Mark. While the carters were crossing the River Adda on the way to Milan, the wagon tipped over, spilling the statue, which landed on its feet, an event Sanudo interpreted as an ill omen for the French.¹⁸ An earthquake in Venice in 1511, which tumbled walls, rang bells in the swaying towers, and created a lagoon tsunami, tested Sanudo's reporting and interpretive skills. He and others understood the damage as a prognostication for the outcome of the war. A piece of marble with carvings of lilies fell into the courtyard of the Ducal Palace, which "many took . . . as a good omen indicating that the lily, which is the emblem of France, will fall and be ruined. May God so will it for the good of Italy, scourged by these barbarians!" Sanudo explained the fall of a marble statue of Prudence in the church of San Basso as a warning: "Take care, take, care, Venice; mind you be prudent in these times, for these are evil days.'" In contrast, when an iron cross fell from the roof of San Giacomo di Rialto and landed upright, Sanudo wrote that "this is a sign that this city will be the savior of Italy and of the Christian faith and will chase the barbarians out of Italy, provided that it is supported in true faith by Italians."¹⁹ The barbarians in this case were the French led by their Most Christian Majesty.

Sanudo's accounts of omens and other uncanny events disclosed a hermeneutic trait Anthony Pagden has called the "principle of attachment," characteristic of Europeans confronted with the disorienting strangeness of the Amerindian cultures of the New World. "The principle of attachment served to make the incommensurable seem commensurable, if only for as long as it took the observer's vision to adjust . . . Attachment allowed for the creation of an initial (if also sometimes troubling) familiarity. It also allowed . . . some measure of classification."²⁰ Conservative patriot that he was, Sanudo agreed with many of his patrician contemporaries in attaching accidents and natural disasters to the interpretive trope of omens, which expressed contemporary anxieties about Venice's prospects in the ongoing wars.

Sanudo, however, often found clerical interpretations of omens tendentious and self serving. After more tremors frightened the city, the patriarch

¹⁸ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 8:448, 478.

¹⁹ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 12:79–80. Translations of quotes from Sanudo, *Città Excelentissima*, pp. 374–75.

²⁰ Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven, 1993), p. 36.

announced that the earthquakes signaled divine anger with the sins of the Venetians, especially sodomy, incest, blasphemy, and the failure to confess. With the acquiescence of the doge and Collegio, the patriarch ordered a three-day fast of bread and water with morning and evening propitiatory processions. Sanudo dryly observed, "I applaud these measures as far as good habits and religion go, but as far as preventing earthquakes, they accomplish nothing, for these are a phenomenon of nature."²¹ When news arrived from Chioggia in May 1519 reporting that a spirit had manifest itself by knocking under a bed in a room in the episcopal residence where priests slept, Sanudo was at first doubtful: "For several days the news of this has already been bruited about the city. But I did not want to record it until I better understood the matter." The priests reported the spirit was warning the Chioggians about a coming *acqua alta*, a warning that threw the city into such a panic that pregnant women miscarried. The frightened bishop abandoned his flock for the safety of Venice and refused to return even after the Council of Ten ordered him back. An investigation soon revealed the whole matter to have been a fraud, which Sanudo termed, "a very ridiculous affair."²²

In other cases of the miraculous, Sanudo suspended his skepticism. In 1507 in anticipation of Easter, news began to circulate about the many miracles performed by the 35-year-old abbess of the Poor Clares in Venice. "It is said that she goes forty days without eating, that on Fridays she goes into spiritual transports, and finally that she performs great miracles. It is said that on Good Friday everything will be known, that she will certainly die, etc."²³ Upon investigation, her father superior and Cardinal Grimani both seemed to confirm the validity of the reports, but there is no record of her predicted death on Good Friday.

The portends most revealing about the cultural assumptions of Sanudo's Venice came from reports of monstrous births.²⁴ Sanudo seems to have been especially fascinated by them, and he recorded detailed descriptions of deformed babies from many places. In one case he pasted a printed interpretation of the meaning of the monster of Castelbaldo into his diaries, and during the tense days of the War of the League of Cambrai,

²¹ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 12: 84. Translations from Sanudo in *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 377.

²² Sanuto, *I diarii*, 27:267–68, 298–99, 320. Translations from Sanudo in *Cità Excelentissima*, pp. 399–402.

²³ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 7:40. Translations from Sanudo in *Cità Excelentissima*, pp. 392–93.

²⁴ On monstrous births, see Lorraine J. Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, 1997), pp. 173–90; and Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 30–60.

he ventured his own interpretation of the monster of Bologna, “which has two faces, three eyes, and on top of its head the open vulva of a woman.” He did not discuss the double forehead with three eyes, but wrote:

I turn to the third figure, of the vulva, with tears in my eyes, for Italy has become this monster with closed eyes and two faces looking in two different directions because of its division—one part looking west [toward France] to follow its inclinations and its own convenience, the other looking north [toward the Holy Roman Empire] according to its passions—and thus divided and blinded, O miserable wretch! It has become a monster. The open vulva on its head is that homeland and province that has so long preserved and defended the beauty, the virginity, and the modesty of calamity-stricken Italy. Since she has been so prostrated, and with her vulva open, many outsiders, as we have seen with our own eyes, come to indulge their lust and debauch [her]. Even in this hour she continues to invite more outsiders.

One need not dwell on the anatomical details that intrigued Sanudo, but note his impulse to interpret the coincidence of a monstrous birth and a war against Venice. The events of war had become so unpredictable that the normally cautious Sanudo leapt into the interpretive void. He felt the obligation to find meaning in the unusual, and he was aware that he was taking a risk:

I am certain that these modern “sages” who advise princes with their tricks and their subterfuges, and “do not fear God but trust in their own cunning,” would laugh at my words. And I laugh at theirs” with the confidence of “a man who is Catholic and well-mannered, serious, experienced, old, and prudent, and removed from all passion and avarice. . . .”²⁵

When it came to allegations of witchcraft, Sanudo entered into one of the great cultural controversies of his time, which drew cosmopolitan Venice into the world of a mountain peasant culture that hardly seemed Christian at all. In 1518, Sanudo copied a letter from a Venetian patrician who wrote about the witches of Val Camonica, a mountain valley above Brescia:

This place, however, is more mountain than valley, more sterile than fertile, and its inhabitants for the most part are more ignorant than anything else, people afflicted with goiter, almost all of them with the grossest deformations and completely lacking in the forms of civilization. Their customs are most frequently rustic and wild; rare are those who are familiar with, let alone observe, the commandments of the Lord. One can say that in a sense there is as much difference between these valley folk and the other

²⁵ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 17:515–16. Translations from Sanudo in *Città Excelentissima*, pp. 416–17. On this passage, also see Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 52–56.

inhabitants of the Brescian territory as there is between the Portuguese and the people of Colocut [in India]. As rumor has it, for a number of years warlocks and witches have [practiced] there.²⁶

Based on the rumor, the bishop sent inquisitors, who found “an incredible number of warlocks and more followers of the devil than Christians” because some priests had not been properly baptizing infants but only pretending to do so and did not consecrate the Host when they celebrated Mass. “These priests were themselves the chief warlocks.” The letter continued with a standard description of a witches’ Sabbat and satanic practices that followed the script laid out in the *Malleus Malificorum*, a text that certainly informed the inquisitors’ questions.²⁷ Trials followed in four places in the Val Camonica, which resulted in the burning of more than 60 men and women and many more imprisoned. The anonymous eyewitness whose letter Sanudo copied was deeply disturbed by what he saw. He worried that the procedures had been illegal and that some of the condemned seemed to be truly repentant. Nevertheless, the inquisitor insisted they be burned alive anyway. According to the witness, the condemned had been so cruelly tortured that they confessed to many false things. Some of the women, he thought, were truly witches because they admitted to repudiating baptism, but he was profoundly shaken by what he had seen: “I realize that these are grave matters to relate, and I am amazed and beside myself. I believe them, but yet I do not believe them.”²⁸

Elite Venetians exhibited a range of opinions about the reality of witchcraft. The inquisitors were obstinate in their beliefs, but many laymen seem to have been as undecided as the anonymous letter writer. Among the highest intellectual and political circles of Venetian society, skepticism was firmer. Sanudo’s patron, the influential Luca Tron, thought the whole matter crazy, refused to credit the Sabbat stories, and insisted the government should not get involved. Sanudo seemed to follow Tron’s lead, reporting that the alleged witches were just ignorant and foolish.²⁹ On this crucial subject, which reveals a great deal about the relationships between elite and popular culture, there was no uniformity of opinion. Although the Venetian elites may have found the peasants of the

²⁶ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 25:602–03. Translation from Sanudo in *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 403.

²⁷ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 25:603–08. Translation from Sanudo in *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 404. On witchcraft in Venice, see Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550–1650* (Oxford, 1989).

²⁸ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 25:586–88. Translation from Sanudo in *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 407.

²⁹ Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, pp. 411–12.

mountain territories as inscrutable as the Portuguese found the Hindus of India, they were unwilling to credit the most inflammatory misinterpretations of their practices. The record is foggy about exactly what the alleged witches themselves believed and did.³⁰

Venetians need not search their mountain dominions to find the cultural Other. Living alongside Sanudo and his peers in Venice itself and appearing on a regular basis in foreign embassies were peoples who did not fit into the elite Venetian scheme of things.

Encounters with the "Other"

The Venetians' relationship with the Ottoman Turks was perhaps the most ambivalent and carefully orchestrated, simply because the Turks were both a trading partner and a potential threat to Venice's maritime empire.³¹ Despite a series of conflicts, Venice's attitude toward the Ottomans was far less hostile than those of any other Catholic power, save perhaps France. Like the French, Venice needed the Ottomans, if for no other reason than as a counterweight to the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of Hungary. The arrival of an Ottoman ambassador was always a noted event. In 1516 the ambassador of the sultan arrived with an attendant carrying a pole with a human head stuffed with straw at the end. The ambassador presented the head, which had belonged to the defeated Egyptian captain, to the Signoria as a memento of the Ottoman victory. Another Turkish ambassador created a diplomatic incident when he complained that he had not been given the same quality of gifts as his predecessor. Sanudo was especially diligent in recording the dress of the Turks, always noting their turbans.³² Except to record that Sultan Suleiman persecuted Jews in his territories and rigidly followed Muslim laws, Sanudo has little to say about Islam.³³ The religion of others just did not engage him beyond the recognition that other faiths were clearly wrong in comparison to Christianity. The fact that during Sanudo's lifetime the Turkish ambassador was not resident but only an occasional emissary meant that

³⁰ See Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore, 1983), for a similarly obscure agrarian cult the inquisitors considered witchcraft.

³¹ Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi* (Florence, 1975).

³² Sanuto, *I diarii*, 22:460; 14:410–11; 19:331; 53:253.

³³ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 33:315–16.

the practice of Islam within the confines of Venice was not yet the issue that it would become in the 17th century.³⁴

Like the Turks, the far more numerous Germans represented a transitory presence in Venice. Their *fondaco* or warehouse at the Rialto was a vital commercial asset that the Venetians prized, but its merchants came and went. Germans did not present a cultural challenge to the Venetians, at least before Martin Luther's books and ideas began to spread in Venice. Sanudo himself owned some Lutheran books, and the Republic was slow to suppress them. The patriarchal vicar arranged for a police raid on a German bookseller's shop in 1520, but the most dangerous source of Lutheran ideas in Venice came not from Germans but from the extremely popular preaching of Andrea of Ferrara, whom the pope insisted must be silenced. By 1525, Sanudo noted that the majority of Germans in the *fondaco* ate meat during Lent, a sign of Lutheranism, but the heresy was not necessarily associated with German ethnicity.³⁵

Encounters with Greeks and Jews were more fraught than those with German Lutherans, simply because the Venetian government permitted the practice of the ancient religions, often in the face of opposition from ecclesiastical authorities. Unlike the Germans whose presence was exclusively commercial, the Greeks included prominent intellectuals, refugees from lands conquered by the Turks, and *stradioti*, cavalymen recruited from Dalmatia, Albania, and Greece. The issue for them was the free practice of the Greek rite, a privilege that the Venetian government with papal backing sought to guarantee but that the patriarchs habitually opposed. After the Venetians allowed the Greeks to build their own church, the patriarch excommunicated them and arrested one of their priests in an attempt to force them to use Catholic priests. It took a papal commissioner to resolve the dispute.³⁶

Even more controversial among Venetians were the Jews. Since during the 15th century they could not legally reside in the city, most had houses in Mestre, on the edge of the lagoon. There was periodic agitation against them, especially by preachers during Lent. Stories of alleged ritual murder, such as that of Simon of Trent in 1475, circulated in Venice, but the Jews' economic usefulness led to their negotiated protection guaranteed

³⁴ Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*; Ella-Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, 2011).

³⁵ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 29:335, 492, 552, 615; 38:185.

³⁶ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 42:101; 46:381–82, 410–11; 49:93.

by contracts.³⁷ Thus, there was always a tension between the necessary presence of Jews and the unnecessary Christian biases against them. After the Venetian loss at Agnadello in 1509, the enemy burned Mestre, and Jews flooded into Venice along with other refugees. The Jews settled into various neighborhoods, creating an unprecedented presence in the streets and *campi* of Venice. Sanudo recorded in 1515 that “it used to be that from before Palm Sunday to after Easter they were not to be seen. This year they were out and about until yesterday [Holy Thursday], and this is a very bad thing. No one says anything to them because, with these wars, they need them; thus they do what they want.”³⁸ The Senate considered a proposal to isolate the Jews on the Giudecca, which Jewish leaders managed to prevent, but the pressure was so great that by 1516 the Senate ordered all Jews to live in the Ghetto, which was to be walled and guarded day and night. The neighborhood, which had previously been the location of a foundry (*gettare* means “to cast,” hence Ghetto), became a fortress that both protected the Jews from assault and robbery and placed them under surveillance and curfew.³⁹ The Jews remained in the Ghetto, but the walls were often quite permeable. Jewish physicians served Christian patients, Jewish merchants traded on the Rialto and provided vital loans to the government and the poor, and Jewish intellectuals interacted with their Christian counterparts. There was, however, continuous pressure on the Jews to convert, and the baptism of a Jew became a moment for joyous celebration among Venetian Christians.⁴⁰

One of Sanudo's most noticeable silences was on the subject of the vast majority of Venetians, the common people—the guildsmen, shopkeepers, sailors, Arsenal workers, laborers, servants, and minor professionals such as notaries. Except for extraordinary circumstances such as famine, when starving beggars interfered with access to Mass or Carnival banquets, they

³⁷ Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 431–509; R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial* (New Haven, 1992); Robert C. Davis and Benjamin C. I. Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001).

³⁸ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 20:98. Translation from Sanuto, *Città Excelentissima*, pp. 337–38.

³⁹ Benjamin Ravid, “On Sufferance and Not as of Right: The Status of the Jewish Communities in Early Modern Venice,” in David Malkiel, ed., *The Lion Shall Roar: Leon Modena and his World* (Jerusalem, 2003), pp. 17–61; Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice*, p. 487.

⁴⁰ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 46:501–02. Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice 1550–1670* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 58–72, 243–312. Ella-Natalie Rothman, “Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21 (2006), 39–75.

were unworthy of record.⁴¹ To the degree that they were noticed, Sanudo treated the lower classes with ridicule or condescension. During the War of the League of Cambrai, he reported how the government attempted to control the bridge battles between the Nicolotti and Castellani factions of workers because they had caused fatalities.⁴² Even more troubling to him were servants who imitated patrician Carnival entertainments by establishing their own festive company. At their party “each came with his harlot, and they danced all night, and they had supper there, and they did not admit anyone else. Thus the servants are competing with the nobles to hold parties. It was a bad thing to do, and the heads of the Ten should have done something about it.”⁴³ However, Sanudo frequently wrote about the affairs of Venice’s famous prostitutes, especially the talented and better-off courtesans. He recorded how musicians esteemed the courtesan-singer Lucia Trevisan, but more often he wrote of scandals—a fight over a prostitute’s favor, an assault on a courtesan, the marriage of a patrician widower to a courtesan with a public history of former lovers, and a case of bigamy involving a prostitute. In Sanudo’s eyes, at least, courtesans were an accepted part of Venetian life, and he saw nothing wrong when they were made available to visiting dignitaries, including Cardinal Ippolito Medici.⁴⁴

Venetian Ritual Life

Sanudo and his patrician peers most often experienced and memorialized an entirely different kind of encounter, the encounter with the myth of Venice and its innumerable ritual manifestations. (On the myth, see the chapter by James Grubb in this volume.) The myth projected an idealized Venice both in its history and its political structures: a myth of its auspicious origins in ancient Troy, the patronage of the Evangelist Mark, its imperial prerogatives authorized by the papacy, its serene nature, and its ideal republican constitution. The ritualization of the myth was not so much a mirror of Venetian society as it was as a model for what it might be, but the myth animated the very heart of Venetian patrician culture. As a result, Venice was intensely conservative in its politics, but the stability

⁴¹ On famines, see Sanuto, *I diarii*, 45:141; 46:380, 612.

⁴² Sanuto, *I diarii*, 11:571–72. On bridge battles, see Davis, *The War of the Fists*.

⁴³ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 37:578. For translation, see Sanudo, *Città Excelentissima*, p. 325.

⁴⁴ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 16:555; 19, 138; 33:233; 41:166; 56:95–96; 57:111–12.

that conservatism produced allowed a level of religious and intellectual speculation that was unusual, even dangerous in the rest of Italy, especially by the late 16th and 17th centuries when the stakes for conformity to Catholic orthodoxy were higher than they were in Sanudo's day.⁴⁵ Venetian civic rituals were augmented during the course of the 16th century by the flowering of Venetian theater, the first buds of which were evident in Sanudo's own time. Sanudo was an ardent fan and occasional critic of Venetian rituals and dramatic performances, accounts of which fill his diaries.

Exemplary punishments supplied a baseline for the ritual expression of Venetian authority. In 1506, a prostitute who had murdered a blacksmith faced an especially elaborate ritual execution. The Quarantia Criminale decreed that "she be transported along the Grand Canal on a float, as usual, as far as Santa Croce; she should disembark on *Corpus Domini*, where she will be taken on a litter by land to Santa Sofia, and there [at the scene of the crime] a hand will be cut off; then she will be taken to San Marco, also by land, and between the two columns she will be whipped and then decapitated; her head is to be hung up at San Giorgio, and the body is to be burned."⁴⁶ The return to the murder scene where the murderess had her hand, the instrument of the crime, chopped off produced a ritual exorcism of the defiled space and extended the authority of the republic into the neighborhoods. Government in Venice and its dominions consisted primarily of the administration of justice. The procession to Venice's political center at the columns of Justice, which were topped with the images of the dual patrons of the republic, St Mark and St Theodore, tied together through ritualized justice the center and the periphery, but as recent research has shown, executions took place all over the city. Justice was as much defused as centralized, revealing an attempt to make the rituals of justice fit into the localized urban spaces where crimes took place.⁴⁷ The details of these ritual punishments were not uniform but became a matter of debate in the highest councils. The murder of a grocer from Montenegro by his wife Bernardina was deemed especially

⁴⁵ Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007).

⁴⁶ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 6:289. Translation mine. See Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, p. 247.

⁴⁷ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, "La proximité en négatif: pratiques de stigmatisation et espaces du quotidien dans l'Italie de la Renaissance," paper presented at conference on *The Power of Space: Cities in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy and Northern Europe*, The Italian Academy, Columbia University, N.Y., March 2010, publication forthcoming.

heinous because she murdered him in his sleep, had attempted to involve her daughter in the cover-up, and suborned a military officer into helping her bury the body. The deed required exceptional punishment. Like the murderess of 1506, she was taken to the scene of the crime where her hand was cut off, but the sentence insisted that she be transported to the columns of Justice on a high platform on a barge so that everyone could see her. Officials debated about whether she should be beaten senseless or decapitated before being drawn and quartered. Sanudo noted "that no other case has been found of a woman who, whatever her crime, was quartered. This is the first one. This was a very important case: it is quite true that other women have killed their husbands, but none with so much ferocity."⁴⁸

The complex of buildings and monuments that composed the symbolic realm of Venetian justice, the Basilica of San Marco and its large open Piazza, created a ritual space that contrasted with Genoa, for example, where houses crowded up to the façade of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Leading away from the Piazza toward the lagoon was the secondary ceremonial space of the Piazzetta, which flanked the Ducal Palace. Venetians and visitors often referred to the Basilica and the surrounding complex of public spaces of Piazza and Piazzetta as a "theater." An inscription above one of the doorways into the Basilica specifically calls the church a *theatrum*, a "gathering place" in the original meaning of the word.⁴⁹ This grand theater became a stage for representations of the myths of Venice through civic rituals. Sanctified by the presence of the body of St Mark under the high altar in the Basilica, rituals acted out the political theology of the republic, a model of how divine virtues infused political virtues. Here both Venetians and foreign visitors encountered the archetypes of a perfected Venice, and these encounters, no matter how divorced from the turbulent realities of the world, created an image of harmony, peacefulness, and probity that established the grounds for the anthropology of Venice. From Renaissance visitors to modern historians, the task of interpreting Venice has required evaluating the heuristic value of this mythic image.

Sanudo treated civic rituals and festivities with an earnest compulsion to record details as fully and accurately as possible. To him these were matters as serious as diplomatic negotiations or rumors of war. The principal

⁴⁸ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 31:163–65. For translation, see Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 130.

⁴⁹ See editors' comments in Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 487.

lexical unit of the Venetian ritual vocabulary was the ducal procession. A civic procession typically consisted of a parade of officials and symbols, including the ducal *trionfi*. Position in the procession meant everything for the officials, with those walking closest to the doge in the middle of the line garnering the most prestige, a ceremonial positioning that represented the constitutional hierarchy of the republic. The *trionfi*—the banners, musical instruments, candle, cushion, faldstool, umbrella, and sword—signified the doge's authority and the principles of the myth of Venice: the city's devotion to the Roman Church, the doge's exalted rank as an equal to popes and emperors, St Mark's patronage of Venice, and the republic's commitment to justice.⁵⁰ Attached to the ducal procession as it progressed around Piazza San Marco were sometimes other groups such as foreign ambassadors, members of the Scuole Grande confraternities, or pilgrims. By the end of the 16th century there were 16 obligatory annual processions, a significant increase from Sanudo's time. Of these, Corpus Christi created the opportunity for the most elaborate displays of allegorical floats, which often commented on contemporary events. In addition to the annual processions there were numerous special observances occasioned by significant events: receptions for foreign emissaries or princes; celebrations of victories, peace treaties, or liberation from a plague or famine; and public recognition of a moment of spiritual or ecclesiastical significance.⁵¹

The ducal processions were not just models of an idealized Venice but also became mirrors of the current mood of the city. The annual Corpus Christi procession of 1509 held just three weeks after the Venetian defeat at Agnadello was especially tense.

It was the feast of Corpus Christi, on which there is a solemn procession in San Marco, and so it was done. But first the heads of the Ten ordered that there should be no ladies on the balconies of the Piazza, nor should any children or women be allowed inside the Piazza. Instead, there were about one thousand men armed with swords and shields and breastplates under their cloaks, and twenty of these, under the [command of the] six deputies and the captains, were posted at the corners of the Piazza, where the entrances are, to watch those entering the Piazza. And this was started at an early hour. The scuole processed, and the friars . . . ; then the priests and canons without silver objects, but well vested, although not sumptuously; then came the body of Christ under its canopy and the patriarch wearing vestments . . .

⁵⁰ Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, p. 205.

⁵¹ Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 212–50.

Then the doge, dressed in crimson velvet, followed him, trembling... The area encircling the Signoria [the assembled high officials] was full of these armed men, for fear of disturbances, which gave the city much to talk about. Nevertheless, it was said that there would be an uprising, and many avoided going to the Piazza. There were few patricians with the Signoria, nearly all of them dressed in purple, with about eight in scarlet and others wearing black. There were no pilgrims, as there usually are on this occasion.⁵²

The very fact that fear of rebellion manifest itself on the occasion of one of the great annual processions is evidence of how significant Venetians considered them. For the more usual processions, Sanudo's logaria was in full force. He recorded all the participants and especially noted their dress: of the 72 patricians attending the 1519 Corpus Christi procession, only 18 wore scarlet, which made a poor impression.⁵³ He noted how the Turkish ambassador, who witnessed the 1525 Corpus Christi procession, complained that he did not like the graven images suggested by allegorical floats of the laws of the Old Testament and would have much preferred to watch a joust.⁵⁴

Sanudo did not usually concern himself with the exegesis of these processions, the meaning of which he took for granted. He was more concerned with listing the participants and describing their dress, creating a symbolic catalogue of honor—"His Serenity the doge, dressed in gold brocade and wearing a corno of beautiful iridescent gold cloth"; "the Most Serene Doge, dressed in gold and with a mantle of white-gold damask and a corno of the same damask of white gold"; "many women were present [at a play], showing off their rich clothing. Among them I saw the wife of ser Zuan Emo dressed in cloth of gold and over it a lightweight black silk, as a sign of mourning, but cut so that the gold was visible. And there were other women wearing other fashions." The festive Compagnia of the Immortali

come dressed in purple velvet trimmed with vair. Their sleeves are gathered, with one red stocking and the other half-purple and half-grey. The lord of the compagnia wears a garment of crimson two-pile fabric with open sleeves lined with ermine; on his head is a cap of black velvet in the French fashion, with a jewel attached.⁵⁵

⁵² Sanuto, *I diarii*, 8:372–73. For translation of quote, see Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, pp. 369–70.

⁵³ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 27:404.

⁵⁴ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 39:78.

⁵⁵ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 56:285–86; 41:307; 19:443; 7:69. For translations of quotes, see Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, pp. 37–371, 83, 489, 288 respectively.

For Sanudo, clothing and fashion were more about colors and cloth than design. There were honorable colors—gold, crimson, scarlet, purple—and honorable materials—damask, gold thread, fur—that were proper for distinguishing the patriciate and bringing honor to Venice's ceremonies. Mourning black always seemed to disappoint Sanudo: at a wedding “both the compagnia members and the groom wore black, which in my opinion was not the thing to do. On a day like today they should have worn [red] silk, or at least scarlet cloth.”⁵⁶ He also recorded the fashions of the poor. During a famine he wrote how “it is heartrending to see the numbers of the destitute and above all, the poor women of Burano, who go seeking alms with their outer skirts over their heads, as is their custom.”⁵⁷

The competitive impulse to impress through conspicuous dress, large dowries, lavish weddings, and expensive parties created a tension in patrician society manifest in the recurrent sumptuary laws, most of which targeted women. The most minute details were regulated, down to the size of the gold chains ladies were allowed to wear around their necks. “Pelisses may not be lined with lynx, sable, marten, ermine, or squirrel-back, nor may they have a covering of iridescent silk or silk, nor bodices of gold or silver, nor any other type of work.” Despite threats that “women who will have been found to have broken the law in any way, or who have worn the forbidden items, even some of them, will be stripped of the garments and will forfeit them,” the laws were frequently ignored, and those who were caught paid fines that amounted to a kind of consumption tax.⁵⁸

The theatrical world of Venice manifest in its civic rituals and grand festivities coalesced during Sanudo's own lifetime around the comic theater associated with Carnival and the festive Compagnie della Calza. Especially in the productions of the Paduan playwright Angelo Beolco, known by his stage name Ruzante, the patrician and peasant worlds met in drama.⁵⁹ From the neighborhood *campi*, patrician palaces, churches, and convents to the Piazzetta of the Ducal Palace, drama permeated Venetian life, especially during Carnival. Here the tensions of class and gender, pretense and poverty, piety and sacrilege were played out, sometimes to general satisfaction, sometimes to scandal. Sanudo considered himself a good judge of drama: “Zuan Polo and his son did the intermezzi; they were rather good.”

⁵⁶ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 37:471. For translations, see Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 299.

⁵⁷ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 47:42. For translation, see Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, p. 333.

⁵⁸ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 50:305 on gold chains; 11:796–99 for clothing details. For translations, see Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, pp. 306, 307.

⁵⁹ Linda L. Carroll, *Angelo Beolco Il Ruzante* (Boston, 1990).

On another occasion, he complained about “a very poor festa, and Cherea [the actor] was reproached by everybody. The one . . . produced last year . . . was much better; I conclude that this was a very bad showing.”⁶⁰ On other occasions he complained about the obscenity in Ruzante’s plays.

Venetian Cultural Filters

The remarkable conservatism of the Sanudo’s vision of Venice can be demonstrated through comparison with Martin da Canal’s *Les Estoires de Venise*, composed more than 200 years earlier. Although written in Franco-Venetian to appeal to the literary tastes and linguistic capabilities of late 13th-century readers and crammed into the literary model of a French romance-epic, da Canal’s history anticipated and perhaps helped form Sanudo’s cultural filters.⁶¹ To da Canal, Venice was about its conquests and victories, but most of all it was about its festivities, the annual civic processions, and the glory of the doge and his retinue. In Sanudo’s time there were no longer jousts in the Piazza, and the dogaressa’s patronage of Venetian guildsmen was less celebrated, but the myth of Venice and the ducal processions looked very similar.⁶² The comparison of Sanudo and da Canal suggests that embedded in the anthropology of patrician Venice was the immensely popular cultural form of late medieval chivalry, honed during the Crusades, bequeathed to Venice after the conquest of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, and modified in later centuries by Italian republican thought and institutions.

The elite, patrician myth represented only the upper stratum of meaning in Venice, but it was a decidedly thick layer and one that must be carefully scraped away before the other strata can be excavated. The archeology of Venetian culture has been fruitfully classified by analyses of transgressions and crime. Crime, sexual violence, magical practices, blasphemy, insults, and gossip all reveal a society split by antagonisms among the elite itself and by strife among the other classes.⁶³ Venice was not

⁶⁰ Sanuto, *I diarii*, 32:446; 44:172. For translations of quotes, see Sanudo, *Cità Excelentissima*, pp. 492, 510 respectively.

⁶¹ See Laura K. Morreale’s Introduction to the English translation of Martin da Canal, *Les estoires de Venise: Cronaca veneziana in lingua francese dalle origini al 1275*, ed. Alberto Limentani (Florence, 1972), trans. Laura K. Morreale (Padua, 2009), p. viii.

⁶² On the dogaressa, see Hurlburt, *The Dogaressa of Venice*.

⁶³ Guido Ruggiero, *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1980); Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1985); Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*; and Horodowich, *Language and Statecraft*.

the peaceful paradise imagined in the myth, something Sanudo's account amply confirms no matter how often Sanudo himself evoked it. The Venetian state was not everywhere, but it did attempt to spread its tentacles of control into the narrow *calle* and dark taverns of the city and, especially after the War of the League of Cambrai, into the villages of the plains and mountains of the *terraferma*. During the 16th century, the Venetian government evolved a comprehensive theory of malfeasance that included as criminal acts not only transgressions against persons and property but also scandalous language against private persons, the state, and God. In so doing, the Venetian government attempted to become the cultural arbiter of its territories by imposing its own assumptions about proper government, proper behavior, and proper speech on all its subjects.⁶⁴ In this project of cultural colonization, however, numerous alternative spaces of resistance persisted. No matter what their masters demanded, Venetian workers had their own codes of honor found in pride of skilled work, the carnivalesque pleasures of the *campi*, and the codes of masculinity manifest in the bridge battles.⁶⁵

A century after the young Marin Sanudo's travels on the *terraferma*, Venice's attitude toward the feuding violence and aristocratic codes of honor of the countryside had changed profoundly. Sanudo and his uncle accepted rural society as it was, respected the local jurisdictions of the aristocracy, and barely paid attention to distinctive rural mores. Venetian culture was a thin veneer devoted to administering the institutions of justice, not eradicating the underlying causes of violence and disorder. By the early 17th century, Venice wielded a much heavier hand. The Republic authorized the officers of the Inquisition to eradicate heresy, magical practices, and superstitions. The Republic's judiciary attacked rural culture by criminalizing the traditional forms of conflict resolution through vendetta and aristocratic violence. An alliance between the Venetian judiciary and small landowners displaced the aristocratic tyrants. As revealed in the sensational 1605 trial of Paolo Orgiano for rape, sodomy, and assault of his own feudal subjects, Venice employed its judiciary in a program of systematic cultural reform that redefined concepts of honor in a way unheard of in Sanudo's day. The lord of Origiano did not deny the charges

⁶⁴ Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*; Furio Bianco, 1511: *La "crudel zobia grassa": rivolte contadine e faide nobilari* (Pordenone, 1995); Povoletto, *L'intrigo dell'Onore*; McGough, *The Disease that Came to Stay*.

⁶⁵ Robert C. Davis, *Shipbuilders of the Venetian Arsenal: Workers and Workplace in the Preindustrial City* (Baltimore, 1991); Davis, *The War of the Fists*, pp. 89–128.

so much as assert that his multiple rapes had not hurt anyone's honor because all the village women were "whores" anyway. In their investigation, the judges asked the women about their own definitions of honor, revealing how a preoccupation with personal honor permeated all levels of society.⁶⁶ Cultural transformation came from the encounters among these contrasting concepts of honor, and Venice facilitated the transformation by accepting that even humble men and women possessed honor. By investigating malfeasance, Venice uncovered the many cultures of its dominion, making it possible to see far deeper layers of meaning than what Marin Sanudo and his contemporaries ever could imagine.

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⁶⁶ Povoio, *L'intrigo dell'Onore*.

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LITURGIES OF VIOLENCE: SOCIAL CONTROL AND POWER
RELATIONSHIPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE BETWEEN
THE 16TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

Claudio Povolo

Opening Scenes

The Father's Defense

Olzano, a small village in Friuli, 5 May 1594. Four youths from the neighboring village of Premariacco entered the local tavern displaying open aggression toward the inhabitants of Olzano. They were armed with large sticks and their pockets were full of stones. As those present quickly realized, the men's actual targets were representatives of the community who had kidnapped a sheep from a herd caught unlawfully grazing in a field of rye. The clash was sudden and brutal. Two of the men from Olzano were savagely beaten and seriously injured. The four youths were summoned by the seigneurial court of Soffumbergo, to whose jurisdiction the two villages belonged. The Strassoldo family, holders of the feudal rights, assigned the Udinese jurist Eusebio Caimo to collect evidence for the case. Three of the offenders did not even bother to appear in court to justify themselves. The fourth, who was principally responsible for the injuries, also remained in hiding, but his father appeared in his stead to undertake his defense. Several months had passed since the event and in the meantime peace had been made with the offended parties. The defendant's father presented the peace agreement and a defense document, clearly drafted by a lawyer. In the end, the judge imposed on all the defendants only small monetary penalties.

The Oath on the Altar

Tolmezzo, chieftown of Carnia in northern Friuli. On 9 October 1603 the judges of the city court met to announce their decision in the case of Adamo Del Fabro from the village of Avosacco. Del Fabro had actually already been banished for murder from the entire jurisdiction of Carnia in January of the preceding year. But in June of 1603 he had presented a petition to the court asking that the terms of the ancient statutes of Carnia be applied to his case. In support he had also attached a notarial

act recording the peace he had made with the kin of the man he had killed. The court therefore initiated the customary legal procedures by publicizing Del Fabro's request with a notice affixed to the public loggia of Tolmezzo, a copy of which was also sent to the village where the victim's family lived. Since no one was opposed, the judges pronounced the final decision. Adamo Del Fabro was absolved from the penalty of banishment and was permitted to return to the entire territory of Carnia. However, a small fine was imposed, along with the requirement that he reimburse the court for the trial costs. Immediately after the sentencing, Adamo Del Fabro went to the city cathedral where he solemnly swore before the altar of St Martin that he would respect the ancient laws of the community regarding absolution from banishment. These laws provided that, even after making peace with the offended parties, a banished person could freely reenter the territories from which he had been forbidden only after swearing a solemn oath that he would follow and respect the values of the community.¹

As these two episodes demonstrate, in the period between the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century, there were forms of conflict resolution still in active use that were pervaded by the cultural system of kinship and by judicial mechanisms whose goals were defending ancient communal jurisdictional privileges and keeping the peace between different social groupings. In these forms of justice, ancient rituals aimed at regulating feuds between enemy lineages had combined with learned practices developed by jurists who had been intellectually and culturally shaped in Italian universities by formulas drawn from Roman law.² Cultural values such as honor, reputation, charity, and enmity interacted intensely with the many and varied aspects of violence as well as with the community's demands for social order and justice.³ This conception of

¹ Claudio Povoło, *Retiche giudiziarie, dimensioni del penale e prassi processuale nella Repubblica di Venezia: da Lorenzo Priori ai pratici settecenteschi*, in *L'amministrazione della giustizia penale nella Repubblica di Venezia (secoli XVI–XVIII)*, vol. 2: *Retiche, stereotipi, prassi*, ed. G. Chiodi and C. Povoło (Verona, 2004), pp. 54–56, 132, 137.

² On the relationship between the cultural aspects of feud and the concept of vendetta, as it was used in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, see Stuart Carrol, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 5–10; Marco Gentile, *La vendetta di sangue come rituale. Qualche osservazione sulla Lombardia fra Quattro e Cinquecento*, in F. Salvestrini and G.M. Varanini – A. Zangarini, eds., *La morte e i suoi riti in Italia tra Medioevo e prima età moderna* (Firenze, 2007), pp. 209–13. 'Feud and blood feud between customs and legal process in medieval and early modern Europe. A legal anthropological approach', forthcoming essay edited by the Croatian Academy of history of Zagreb.

³ For France in the medieval period, see Esther Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France* (Leiden, 1993), pp. 70–73.

justice was widespread in most of Europe,⁴ even if at the time of the two episodes recounted above, other forms of justice that were more severe and less inclined to accommodate kinship-based conflicts were emerging with force.⁵ In Carnia and the feudal jurisdictions of Friuli, partly because of a lack of strong urban centers capable of asserting the authority of their courts and laws, traditional forms of justice based on medieval legal procedures and the values that underlay them persisted with particular vigor.

Practices and Cultural Aspects of Justice

The administration of civil and criminal justice took highly varied forms in the territories that had become part of the Venetian state, first in the overseas dominion and, beginning in the 15th century, in the mainland dominion. The articles of submission adopted by each mainland city that had ratified Venice's rapid territorial expansion had not substantially altered the strong local autonomy and existing forms of government. The Venetian patricians who were periodically appointed by the Great Council to govern the numerous subject cities were bound for the most part to observe local statutes and customs. The two patricians sent every 16 months to the most important cities as *podestà* and captain had legal, civil, and military functions, but they worked within the existing institutions and urban magistracies. And the judges who in the politically more important cities formed their small retinue (*corte pretoria*) carried out their activities within the various urban institutions and under the names of ancient communal offices.⁶

Like other Italian states, the Venetian state was thus a composite state, heterogeneous and composed of large and small centers, each with its own distinctive features. Institutional historians have labeled it a *stato giurisdizionale*, or "jurisdictional state." This is a state in which the whole had to take into account the existence of a large number of individual

⁴ Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker, *The State, the Community and the Criminal Law in Early Modern Europe*, in V.A.C. Gatrell, B. Lenman, and G. Parker, eds., *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500* (London, 1980), pp. 11–16.

⁵ Pieter Spierenburg, *Social Control and History: An Introduction*, in Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg, eds., *Social Control in Europe*, vol. 1: 1500–1800 (Columbus, 2004).

⁶ Gaetano Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia e stati italiani. Politica e giustizia dal secolo XVI al secolo XVIII* (Turin, 1982), pp. 217–318. And for a general picture, see Gaetano Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia. Dalla guerra di Chioggia alla riconquista della Terraferma* (Turin, 1986).

political entities (cities, rural communes, feudal jurisdictions), which were not arranged hierarchically and each of which was each intent on defending its own identity and autonomy, guaranteed when they became part of the new state. It was thus a state that while territorially extensive did not aspire to uniformity and was not defined in political and geographical terms as an area composed of center and periphery.⁷ While *imperium*, sovereignty, resided in the ruling city of Venice, it was exercised through an administration that was required to operate within each locality. Government of the territory was expressed through jurisdiction,⁸ that is, it relied on the administration of justice, which was charged both with maintaining the peace and the existing order (commutative justice) and with guaranteeing social and economic relationships and exchanges in the light of existing law (distributive justice).⁹ In the ruling city itself, the conduct of politics and justice was entrusted to institutions fundamentally shaped by the ancient structures of the city-state. Only in the last centuries of the Republic would some of the important judicial magistracies, such as the Council of Ten and the *Quarantia*, or the more markedly political ones, such as the Senate, noticeably interfere in the *stato da terra* and the *stato da mar*.

The composite state of the medieval and early modern periods was marked by extreme political and institutional fragmentation. This was embodied in the highly varied set of judicial practices, which were characterized by a body of legal rituals that made clear the complexity of the society that was divided into social classes, each of which had its own dimension of honor. The composite state was administered by means of the trial, or, better, through legal ritual, which, characterized by the disputation between the parties, had the fundamental goal of ascertaining and confirming a right that already existed but that nonetheless had to be reconfirmed.¹⁰ By so doing, the judge who oversaw this legal ritual had the fundamental task of administering and regulating the relationships between the entities in conflict, while at the same time reaffirming the ancient jurisdictional system.

⁷ Maurizio Fioravanti, *Stato e costituzione*, in M. Fioravanti, ed., *Lo stato moderno in Europa. Istituzioni e diritto* (Bari, 2002), pp. 3–14.

⁸ Luca Mannori and Bernardo Sordi, *Giustizia e amministrazione*, in Fioravanti, ed., *Lo stato moderno in Europa*, pp. 63–67.

⁹ Daniela Frigo, *Principe, giudici, giustizia: mutamenti dottrinali e vicende istituzionali fra Sei e Settecento*, in L. Berlinguer and F. Colao, eds., *Illuminismo e dottrine penali* (Milan, 1990), p. 9.

¹⁰ Mannori and Sordi, *Giustizia e amministrazione*, pp. 66–67.

The distinctiveness of the jurisdictional state was manifested most fully in its subjects' ability to turn to the ruler to ensure that their rights were respected.¹¹ Thus, Venetian subjects from every part of the *stato da terra* or the *stato da mar* could turn to the Most Serene Republic to ask for the justice that all too often was not assured either by their local magistrates or by the resident Venetian representatives.¹²

Everywhere, ecclesiastical, seigneurial, and urban jurisdictions were each expressed in various courts, each with differing competencies. Ecclesiastical civil jurisdiction was quite broad, as in the case of matrimonial or inheritance suits, particularly those involving questions of legitimacy.¹³ The ambiguous distinction between crime and sin expanded the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts to such a degree that many crimes were defined as "mixed jurisdiction,"¹⁴ that is, they could be adjudicated either by secular or ecclesiastical courts, depending on the choice of the parties who filed the complaints.¹⁵

Where cities had not perceptibly extended their influence, as in Friuli, a dense web of feudal jurisdictions had become established, each jurisdiction with courts exercising very broad powers in all civil and criminal matters. In the cities of the plains, which also boasted dominion over their respective countrysides, there were numerous courts exercising a wide variety of civil jurisdictions.¹⁶ The large urban centers were distinguished by the presence of courts that had criminal jurisdiction extending over a wide territory. Even if they were presided over by the Venetian patrician appointed as *podestà* and the judges who made up his *corte pretoria*, the law applied was that of the local statutes. And in some large cities, such as Verona and Vicenza, alongside the *podestà* and his court sat judges elected by the city councils.¹⁷

¹¹ C. Nubola and A. Würzler eds., *Suppliche e "gravamina". Politica, amministrazione, giustizia in Europa (secoli XIV–XVIII)* (Bologna, 2002), *passim*.

¹² Claudio Povolo, *Introduzione*, in Claudio Povolo et al., eds., *Il processo a Paolo Orgiano (1605–1607)* (Rome, 2003), pp. xxxiv–xxxviii.

¹³ Brambilla, *Alle origini*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁴ Cohen, *The Crossroads*, pp. 17–18.

¹⁵ Marco Bellabarba, *La giustizia nell'Italia moderna* (Bari, 2008), pp. 61–67; Maureen Mulholland, *Introduction*, in Maureen Mulholland and Brian Pullan, eds., *Judicial Tribunals in England and Europe* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 4–5.

¹⁶ Edward Muir, "Governments and Bureaucracies," in Guido Ruggiero, ed., *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* (Malden, 2007), pp. 107–12.

¹⁷ Claudio Povolo, *L'intrigo dell'onore: Poteri e istituzioni nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Verona, 1997), pp. 103–06, 273–76.

This system as a whole would seem to have been inhospitable to any attempt at schematization or synthesis, unless one considers the legal and cultural features that animated it while also providing a subtle internal logic. Giving coherence to this extremely fragmented institutional system was a legal order focused on the *ius comune* that brought together the disparate legal traditions of Roman law, custom, local statutes, and canon law. Maintaining this coherence was a diverse class of jurists made up of scholars, lawyers, and judges, who provided a practical and theoretical framework capable of assuring the effectiveness and continuity of the system. All the legal bodies, from the small feudal courts to the large urban and ecclesiastical tribunals, worked to uphold the values and major interests of a society based on class divisions and an order centered on honor and maintaining peace.¹⁸

The cultural and legal aspects of justice, filtered through the jurisprudence of the *ius comune* jurists, in fact reflected the values of a society animated by kin groups and the ways that they measured their worth in terms of honor and status.¹⁹ While status defined a kin group and its social position, its aspirations and tensions were expressed in the idiom of honor.²⁰ Through legal institutions developed by *ius comune* jurists, the practices of justice in fact reflect conflicts that were driven by the complex language of honor. Even where it was not readily visible, honor was like a deeply buried nerve that animated conflicts and, above all, constructed the social dimension of kinship.²¹ Violence and honor were also so closely connected because of the close relationship between the physical person and honor: every offense to a person's honor had to be repaid with physical violence.²²

¹⁸ Antonio Manuel Hespanha, *Introduzione alla storia del diritto europeo* (Bologna, 2003), pp. 67–85.

¹⁹ Over the course of the medieval and modern periods, social groupings defined by the patrilineal line emerged and grew stronger, accompanied by practices of exclusion from inheritance of wealth. When there was a clear political power in a territory, this tendency also influenced the transmission of privileges and titles, David Warren Sabean and Simon Teuscher, "Kinship in Europe: A New Approach to Long Term Development," in David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and J. Mathieu, eds., *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Development (1300–1900)* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 10–11.

²⁰ James Casey, *La famiglia nella storia* (Bari, 1991), pp. 53–84.

²¹ Gerd Schwerhoff, "Social Control of Violence, Violence as Social Control: The Case of Early Modern Germany," in Roodenburg and Spiernburg, eds., *Social Control in Europe*, 1:233–39; Anton Blok, *Honour and Violence* (Malden, 2001), p. 9.

²² "The ultimate vindication of honour lies in physical violence and when other means fail the obligation exists, not only in the formal code of honour but in social milieux which

The importance of compensation and compromise in medieval and early modern justice can be seen in all social conflicts. This includes those that were informal and outside the legal institutions, though still marked by a legal ritualism, as well as those more properly public, that is, those in which the parties renounced (even if often only temporarily) informal community mechanisms in order to turn to an urban, seigneurial, or ecclesiastical court. The importance of kinship and honor was clearly perceptible in compromise, as was the desire to rebuild the friendships that had been shattered by conflict.²³

An examination of the judicial practices of the secular and ecclesiastical courts shows that trial rituals and judgments had very weak punitive goals. Even exemplary punishments sacrificed some of their symbolic value in order to fulfill communal demands for guarantees of peace and order. The use of monetary fines as punishment even for blood crimes such as murder suggests how weak the border was between the civil and criminal aspects of conflicts. Legal procedure was characterized by disputation between the parties and aimed fundamentally to re-establish the equilibria disturbed by conflict, as well as re-establish peace between the opposed lineages. Trial rituals themselves were marked by a formalism whose main objective was the restoration of the peace-based order. The so-called *pieggiaria* (a type of surety) allowed the accused to defend himself while out on bail, while the *difesa per patrem* permitted the defendant's father or the most influential member of the lineage to assume the responsibility for a killing to aid the settlement with the opposing group. The *ius comune* jurists had further developed sophisticated distinctions regarding the ways crimes were committed in order to prevent existing feuds between kinship groups from prolonging violence. Thus a defendant could, by means of a safe conduct, appear in order to defend himself from a charge of premeditated murder and, once he was acquitted, if he so chose, appear again to defend himself from one of manslaughter. In this way, the bloodiest manifestations of feud, in which the facts themselves (for example taking the life of a member of a lineage) were held to be more important than the circumstances under which they happened, were lessened in the courts through the mediation of the jurists.

admit no such code, to revert to it"; Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Schechem or the Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 8.

²³ John Bossy, *Postscript*, in John Bossy, ed., *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 287–88.

Over the course of the medieval and early modern periods, especially in the large cities of the Veneto and Lombardy plains, forms of justice took shape that were more clearly punitive. This was shown by the establishment of inquisitorial procedure, which was intended to make the intervention of the court and judges prevail over the autonomous initiative of the parties in an explicit manifestation of the political predominance of the cities and their ruling classes over their respective countrysides and, more generally, over the classes that lacked sufficient honor to enjoy privileged social status.²⁴ Generally speaking, this legal procedure did not in fact change established trial practices, in which the parties to the conflict and their disputation continued to play an important role. For the entire 16th century, moreover, sanctions remained, for the most part, compensatory. The diffusion of fines and banishment as punishments was accompanied by the continued use of peace contracts, which were intended to interrupt the legal processes already underway or else to press the court to impose a lenient punishment.²⁵ Rare executions, which were imposed when the prevailing values were seriously transgressed, joined punishments whose main objective was physically marking those deemed harmful to the community (by, for example, cutting off the ears or nose for theft).²⁶ In short, the administration of justice was deeply affected by the social practices of a society organized by kinship and feud whose main objective was social control, not punishment.²⁷

These forms of justice, bent on creating and maintaining an order focused on peace, would disappear very slowly. Already in the 16th century, however, it is possible to identify the emergence of a decidedly new punitive justice that aimed to support a new concept of order, one that was no longer intertwined with safeguarding the values and balance of power of the city. The old cultural system linked to peace and honor would thus confront a new concept of public order aimed above all at guaranteeing

²⁴ Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate*, pp. 14–16.

²⁵ On the attitude of medieval jurists toward the punishment of banishment, see Trevor Dean, *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 105–06.

²⁶ Claudio Povoło, *Dall'ordine della pace all'ordine pubblico. Uno sguardo da Venezia e il suo stato territoriale (secoli XVI–XVIII)*, in Claudio Povoło, ed., *Processo e difesa penale in età moderna. Venezia e il suo stato territoriale* (Bologna, 2007), pp. 31–38; for Germany, see Jason P. Coy, *Strangers and Misfits: Banishment, Social Control, and Authority in Early Modern Germany* (Leiden/Boston, 2008), pp. 11–30.

²⁷ Martin Dinges, *The Use of Justice as a Form of Social Control in Early Modern Europe*, in Roodenburg and Spierenburg, eds., *Social Control in Europe*, 1:165–69.

the tranquility and security of regions that were geographically and politically much larger than the ancient territorial subdivisions.²⁸

At the root of this great transformation were deep economic and social shifts. While these shifts did not affect the formal political and ideological structure of the class-based social order, they did force it to accommodate a concept of public order whose priorities included, for example, both controlling the increasing geographical mobility and guaranteeing economic exchange,²⁹ as well as ensuring greater social and political mobility in a hierarchy based on values still understood in the language of honor and friendship.³⁰ This transformation was certainly not painless, particularly for the privileged classes such as the ancient nobility of blood, who identified themselves with the traditional political order and the peace-based order that had always characterized civil and penal justice, as well as the underlying state of feud, whose cultural reference points were kinship and honor.³¹

During the 16th century, the desire for social control and limiting violence was noticeable everywhere. This expressed itself above all in the establishment of new secular and ecclesiastical courts and in the diffusion of inquisitorial trial procedures designed to restrain, if not obstruct, the active role of the parties and their opportunities to affect the outcome of a trial.³² This initiative clearly came from the leading sectors of the ruling classes, who identified themselves with the new role being assigned to Church and state. But it also reflects forces and demands that came more generally from a society that considered ever more essential such things as reliable security, seen as vital for economic and social exchange in the increasingly open 16th-century world.

As in other states, in Venice the new Congregation of the Holy Office joined episcopal courts in repressing not only religious dissent but also behavior that was, somewhat questionably, placed in the category of social deviance. The inquisitors' activities were limited by the presence of members of the Venetian patriciate but also worked in collaboration,

²⁸ Povoio, *Dall'ordine della pace*, pp. 26–27.

²⁹ An overview for Italy in Christopher F. Black, *Early Modern Italy: A Social History* (London, 2001), pp. 188–97.

³⁰ Maurice Aymard, *Amicizia e convivialità*, in P. Ariès and G. Duby, eds., *La vita privata dal Rinascimento all'Illuminismo* (Rome/Bari, 1987), pp. 360–65.

³¹ James R. Farr, *Honor, Law and Custom in Renaissance Europe*, in Guido Ruggiero, ed., *A Companion to the Worlds of Renaissance* (Malden, 2007), p. 127.

³² John H. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance: England, Germany, France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), *passim*.

if not competition, with the new magistracy of the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia*. This body was created by the Republic in 1537 to prosecute blasphemy (*bestemmia*), but quickly became involved in other matters considered just as important, such as gambling and the violation of young virgins by deceit.³³

The ecclesiastical and secular authorities sought to discipline the sphere of behavior that was defined both as sin and crime using new authority and procedures. The most important changes, however, were aimed at limiting violence and other behaviors that were perceived to be predatory but that, in many cases, simply reflected a society that was still built around the twin structures of kinship and feud.³⁴ It was into this political space defined by status and honor that important Venetian magistracies such as the Council of Ten and the Senate inserted themselves in no uncertain terms beginning in the last decades of the 16th century.³⁵

Two Scenes to Continue

A Nocturnal Arrest

Saturday, 27 August 1605, in the early hours of the night in the village of Orgiano (Fig. 13.1), about 20 kilometers to the south of Vicenza. The long dusters and wide-brimmed hats, which allowed only glimpses of faces hardened by time and almost camouflaged by shaggy hair, seemed to blur the men moving along the track into the village. They left their horses in a nearby yard and cautiously surrounded the palazzo. Trying not to be

³³ Gaetano Cozzi, *La società veneta e il suo diritto. Saggi su questioni matrimoniali, giustizia penale, politica del diritto, sopravvivenza del diritto veneto nell'Ottocento* (Venice, 2000), pp. 79–83. A summary in Bellabarba, *La giustizia*, pp. 68–75.

³⁴ On the difficulty of exhaustively defining the concept of violence, see Pieter Spierenburg, "Violence: Reflections about a Word," in Sophie Body-Gendrot and Pieter Spierenburg, eds., *Violence in Europe: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (New York, 2008), pp. 13–25. Willem de Haan, "Violence as an Essentially Contested Concept," in Body-Gendrot and Spierenburg, eds., *Violence in Europe*, pp. 37–38, emphasizes the social construction of all forms of violence and the necessity for historians to contextualize violence in order to understand its meaning and ends. This observation is apt for social control in the modern period, in which bloody forms of violence regulated by central institutions were used to combat banditry, which was driven by feuds between clans and the culture of honor. On this culture, see n. 22 and related text.

³⁵ In this Venice was no different from the other political entities of monarchies or principalities, Gregory Hanlon, "Violence and its Control in the Late Renaissance: An Italian Model," in Ruggiero, ed., *A Companion to the Worlds of Renaissance*, pp. 141–43. In a republic, however, this process could have quite different outcomes, as will be seen.

The large group of police then returned to Vicenza, where their captain, Daniele Di Stefani, paused only to secure Orgiano in one of the strongest cells before reporting to the *podestà*. Di Stefani almost immediately had to retrace his steps, however, and retrieve the prisoner, whom the chief of the guards had just put into chains. The *podestà*, Vincenzo Gussoni, ordered that Orgiano be taken from his cell to the town hall, announcing his intention to interrogate the prisoner immediately, and to do so with his judges, whom he had summoned by messenger. Thus, in the middle of the night, began the first interrogation of the Vicentine nobleman Paolo Orgiano, the interrogation that opened the long investigation and trial that would end almost two years later with Orgiano's condemnation to life in prison. The accusations made against him were listed in detail in the long complaint that the community of Orgiano presented to Venice, charges that included numerous rapes (including unnatural ones), injuries, beatings, threats, impeded marriages, and, more generally, a desire to dominate the village like a tyrant.

End of an Outlaw

17 August 1617, around 8 o'clock in the evening. The western bank of Lake Garda. The village of Guardola on the plateau overlooking the northern part of the lake's basin. It had been a frantic rush to the valley with weapons drawn and a body laced with wounds. In the distance, the piercing cries of men calling to each other, the excited orders of the leaders intermixed with arquebus shots fired into the air to signal the presence of the armed groups. The pain and the physical exhaustion, which had worsened over the course of the day, had seemed to disappear with the discovery of an unexpected yet desperately desired escape route. But it had all been in vain. Suddenly the three men found the way blocked by an unexpected armed troop. It was the end, and there was nothing left to do except die fighting, accompanied by his two companions and the honor that had been with him his entire life. The original group of six men had come down into the village at first light and, without any hesitation, kidnapped Giovanni Cavaliere, one of the locality's richest landowners, who just the day before had hosted Giustiniano Badoer, *capitano* of the Riviera del Garda. Badoer, in fact, had just finished an inspection tour of the settlements along the upper lake shore, making sure that the population, which had been armed and organized into troops each headed by a designated leader and deputy, were ready to respond to a possible attack by enemy forces of the archduke, with whom the Republic had been at

war for two years. The population had responded almost spontaneously to the arrival of the bandits, even rallying neighboring villages. The word had quickly spread: the leader of the small group of bandits was the famous Giovanni Beatrice, known throughout the region as Zanzanù (Fig. 13.2). The troop leaders' preemptory orders prevailed, both against fear and against the sympathy that Zanzanù enjoyed among the population of the region. Groups of armed men rushed to block the roads and occupy the passes that led to the nearby border. Others were sent to track the bandits, who had been forced to release their hostage. And still other men went into the mountains, forcing the fugitives to take refuge in a ravine. There the battle raged for the entire day in the summer heat. Two of the bandits were killed in the fierce shooting, along with five men from the village. Another bandit fell to the ground wounded. Only toward evening were the bandits driven out of their refuge. Zanzanù and his two remaining companions managed to escape the encirclement and descend headlong to the valley. But unexpectedly, from below came more men, sent from the community of Gargnano. The bandits' flight finally ended in a small valley bordered by two streams. Surrounded on all sides, the three men fell under the deadly blasts from the attackers' arquebuses. The next day, the bodies of Zanzanù and his companions were transported along the lakeshore to Salò, the capital of the Riviera del Garda. Their formal identification would be the first step in the procedure required to collect the large price on their heads.

These episodes represent two important moments in the complex historical process that, between the 16th and 17th centuries, politically and legally redefined the social equilibria and cultural values that had long characterized the *terraferma* communities in the Veneto and Lombardy and their relationship with the ruling city of Venice.

The first episode comes from a thick file prepared in 1605–07 by order of the Council of Ten at the request of the community of Orgiano, whose representatives had appeared before the *Signoria* to complain about the continuous and repeated abuses committed by the Vicentine nobleman Paolo Orgiano and his *bravi*.³⁶ Paolo Orgiano was responsible for a series of rapes of village women that directly affected not only the physical safety but especially the honor of their husbands, fathers, and brothers. Orgiano, however, was protected by a vast and powerful network of noble

³⁶ See Claudio Povoio, C. Andreato, V. Cesco, and M. Marcarelli, eds., *Processo a Paolo Orgiano (1605–1607)* (Rome, 2003), pp. 15–20.



Figure 13.2. Tignale, Sanctuary of Montecastello (Brescia), ex-voto that describes the death of Zanzanù.

kin, whose influence could be brought to bear on the political and legal institutions in Vicenza. The victims' denunciations to the court in that city in the preceding years had proven useless. Many of them, intimidated and resigned, had finally accepted the situation and given up on any hope of earthly justice. Fra Ludovico Oddi, the village curate, had assumed responsibility for the petitions after learning in confession of the suffering of the women whom Orgiano had raped. But matters would still probably not have changed had Orgiano's abusive and violent behavior not accompanied a more general determination on the part of the local landowning nobility to intimidate socially ambitious peasant families who had begun to refuse to accept the traditional patronage relationships controlled by the aristocracy or the political domination that the city of Vicenza had exercised over the countryside for centuries. The actual, and more subtle, aim of Paolo Orgiano's violence and attacks upon the honor of women was to abase the honor of the men who, as the women's guardians, should have protected them; and, ultimately, to take away the honor of those families who aspired to greater social prominence.

The aristocracy thus performed their acts of violence on the all-important field of honor, with the goal of more clearly delineating the border between itself and subordinate classes. When Paolo Orgiano committed these violations on this contested terrain it created an explosive situation. This instability, coupled with demands for justice emanating from both the charismatic and authoritative figure of the curate and members of the most prominent peasant families of the village at last impelled the Council of Ten to intervene decisively in the local conflict and to begin the legal process that ultimately led to a life sentence for the principal accused.³⁷

The proceedings against Paolo Orgiano and other members of the nobility of Vicenza is thus an important and representative example of the forceful measures that the Republic of Venice, like other Italian and European states, took in this period to weaken not just the power of the aristocracy but also the traditional dominance of cities over their hinterlands. This was a long and complex process, which began in the wake of the tumultuous 16th-century economic transformations and the new pressures exerted by emerging social classes. While it did not change the traditional social hierarchies organized around honor, it did clearly make them more susceptible to contamination from the new hierarchies that were inevitably formed on the basis of wealth as well as of different definitions of what constituted honorable status. A similar process was taking place all across Europe,³⁸ but, as we shall see, the particular features of the Venetian case, which became more pronounced during the second half of the 17th century and the century that followed, are attributable to the fact that these transformations were taking place in a republic that was unable to redefine even partially the fundamental power structures that characterized the relationship between the ruling class of the dominant city and the elites of the subject cities.

This account of the bitter armed conflict that took place in the mountains around Lake Garda on 17 August 1617 comes from the documents submitted by the two participating communities in the course of their efforts to claim the bounty and other benefits offered by the Council of Ten to the killers of the famous bandit Giovanni Beatrice, known as Zanzanù. But the events of that memorable day are also depicted in a majestic ex-voto painted by Giovan Andrea Bertanza, which still hangs

³⁷ Povolo, *L'intrigo*, pp. 335–54.

³⁸ Spierenburg, *Social Control*, pp. 14–15.

in the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Montecastello in Tignale. The artist ably satisfied the demands of the clients commissioning the work, while also skillfully rendering on a symbolic level the sensibility that imbued the new conception of order and social peace that was spreading throughout Europe at this time.³⁹ The power and energy of the forces who inexorably surround the tiny but dangerous group of bandits seem to flow from the order and symmetry with which the attackers are depicted, as well as from the hierarchical arrangement that drives them and keeps them united in a military order (under their leaders and deputy leaders). Then as now, observers cannot help but admire the efficacy and power of their concentric attack. This was the more or less explicit message that the men commissioning the painting (the notables of the community) meant to transmit visually. The bandit should be considered a true outlaw who had nothing to offer when faced with society's desire for peace and order over and against the violent demands of honor on behalf of kin. But the furious and bloody combat, the headlong flight toward the valley floor, the bodies pitilessly brought down by bullets, all under the merciful gaze of the Virgin of Montecastello, were also understood by observers as the perennial tragedy of a lone man—Zanzanù—engaged in a struggle against an overwhelmingly powerful force in which he was destined to fail. The bandit slain by the sovereign forces was also the man who courageously challenged social injustices and the power of those who enjoyed undeserved privilege. The painting still transmits this perception today, inspiring conflicting emotions in wondering and admiring observers.

The armed conflict of 17 August 1617 marked the end of the long and adventurous life of Zanzanù, who had been banished for heeding the hard call of honor that 12 years earlier had driven him to revenge his father's death. He spent his life fighting his many enemies and evading the relentless pursuit of bounty hunters who for years chased him in vain along the lakeshore and through the mountains. His life was one of ostracism imposed by the merciless Venetian institutions, which tenaciously sought to redefine his social identity and inexorably confine him to the sphere of the most abject criminality. But the authorities' unrelenting hostility also inspired an inevitable, contradictory admiration and sympathy for him on the part of a considerable segment of the population, who understood the vicissitudes and motivations that had impelled Zanzanù to follow the arduous path of vengeance to its final destination.

³⁹ Claudio Povoło, *Zanzanù. Il bandito del lago (1576–1617)* (Trento, 2011), pp. 27–38.

Ultimately, the ex-voto painting in the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Montecastello represents the economic and political transformations that signaled the passage from the traditional bandit, formed within the dynamics of local community conflict, to the new figure of the outlaw, who was pursued relentlessly by the state and considered an enemy to be destroyed by any and all means, even the most violent and illegal. And in this painting one can even make out the dimension of myth, which in these years had begun to shroud the life of a man overcome by his sense of honor and destiny, who after his death became a legend that has lasted to our day.⁴⁰

The Great Change

On 15 April 1574, the Council of Ten issued an important law: anyone in any part of the state who was caught in the act of committing a serious crime—such as murder, kidnapping, rape, arson, or roadside robbery—could be killed with impunity. This was a highly significant decision that marked a decisive break with the past and the beginning of a new criminal policy that over the course of the next decades would profoundly change Venice's relationship with its subject cities in the areas of social control and public safety. That same day Venice also ordered all *bravi* out of every corner of the Republic. In subsequent years, other severe laws followed, in particular that of 1578 decreeing the confiscation of goods in cases where the Council of Ten or the Senate handed down convictions for serious crimes committed with premeditation.⁴¹

The laws issued by the Council of Ten reflect first and foremost the need to address serious incidents of disorder and social unrest reported directly by subjects or by the Venetian representatives who ruled the subject cities as *podestà* or captain. The origin of these incidents undoubtedly lay in the profound economic and social transformations that had roiled the cities of the *terraferma* in particular. Increased social fluidity

⁴⁰ The ex-voto painting in Tignale was intended as thanks to the Madonna for her grace and as such was supposed to, through the supernatural, elicit empathy and inspire participation in the event described (on ex-votos, see David Freedberg, *Il potere delle immagini. Il mondo delle figure: reazioni e emozioni del pubblico* (Turin, 2000), pp. 210–42). The painting, however, seems to convey an irreconcilable tension between the aims of those who commissioned the work and the perceptions of those who were its immediate beneficiaries at the time. And, not by chance, the image of Zanzanù itself ultimately took on an undoubted social meaning, just as the repressive action of the legal institutions had long represented it. On this, see Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York, 1969), pp. 19–45.

⁴¹ Povoletto, *L'intrigo*, pp. 123–26.

and geographical mobility had weakened the traditional equilibria that underlay the order centered on peace, which was maintained by the urban legal institutions, municipal laws, and, most important, a conception of justice that was inextricably intertwined with the community and kinship structures.⁴² The emergence of new groups claiming their share of honor and an increase in feuding between noble kin groups accompanied a more general climate of social unrest that gave rise to ever more frequent incidents of a predatory nature, such as robberies along the roadways or even inside of dwellings, as well as unusual levels of violence and abuse. The spread of *bravi* and the ever more frequent incidence of noble violence further suggest that traditional friendship and patronage networks centered on aristocratic lineages had broken down, a sign of the inability of the urban legal institutions to control these networks and keep the peace in the countryside.

The high point of the Venetian criminal policy came in 1580. On 20 May it was decided to grant the Venetian governors (*rettori*) of the large cities of the *terraferma* the power to proceed summarily *manu militari* against bandits captured within the territory from which they had been banished. Any houses that had sheltered them, if fortified, would be demolished. Furthermore, on 20 July, the Council of Ten, issued an exceptionally harsh measure declaring that any bandit could be absolved from his sentence by killing another bandit under a comparable or more serious type of banishment. In this way, the penalty of banishment was definitively removed from the cities' jurisdiction and lost its centuries-old function as a way to curb violence. The new legislation, in fact, contributed to the onset of an extraordinary spiral of violence, as did the bounties and rich rewards offered to bandit killers, which encouraged the formation of bands of bandit hunters. But the legislation also undoubtedly provided a way to cope with the most subversive aspects of noble violence and to eliminate the numerous bands of armed men that raged through the territory, almost always driven by the unrestrainable desire to fulfill the demands of vendetta. The phenomenon was further stimulated by the ability of bandit killers to sell the rights they acquired (the so-called *voci liberar bandito*) to the highest bidder, almost always someone who desired to be released from his banishment.⁴³

⁴² On these issues, see Mark Cooney, *Warriors and Peacemakers: How Third Parties Shape Violence* (New York, 1998), pp. 63–64.

⁴³ Povoletto, *L'intrigo*, pp. 153–70.

It seems clear that only the exceptionally pressing need for social and public order permitted the formulation and promulgation of these laws in a political context still deeply rooted in a traditional vision of jurisdiction and order based on the laws and customs of the subject cities.⁴⁴ These laws, however, would certainly have remained ineffective if they had not been accompanied by a revolution in the administration of criminal justice. Indeed, beginning in the 1580s, the Council of Ten expanded its authority over the courts of the large cities of the Veneto and Lombard plains. Through delegation, which it increased over the course of the first decades of the 17th century, the Council of Ten decisively entered into the settlement of conflicts, particularly noble feuds, which had long been the prerogative of local courts using local laws and procedures that primarily promoted the restoration of peace.

All cases held to be particularly important for the maintenance of public order or for other political reasons were delegated to the *rettori* of the largest cities of the *terraferma* or to the highest Venetian political representatives in the *stato da mar*. Wielding broad powers, they were able to proceed in the cases using the recent laws issued by Venice and the Council of Ten's inquisitorial procedure, which was secret and unencumbered by the customary procedural safeguards. The accused had no right to the assistance of a lawyer and had to defend himself without knowing the identities of the witnesses called to testify. The trials were entrusted to the chancellery of the *podestà*, to the exclusion of local notaries and any other form of legal privilege enjoyed by the city.⁴⁵

Over the course of the 17th century, the control initiatives expanded significantly and even infiltrated the traditional legal procedures still characterized by disputation. City statutes were circumvented by giving the *rettori* the ability to impose very severe punishments and to forbid the granting of bail to the accused. In short, the criminal process underwent important transformations whose essential importance lay in the stronger powers granted to investigating magistrates generally as well as in their inquiries into the truth of the facts. The banishment laws, which became

⁴⁴ John Bossy has identified the persistence of a Christian "moral tradition" above all in the efforts of some bishops (such as Carlo Borromeo) to establish peace between rival groups in active conflict, John Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 10–29. It is likely, however, that these pacification efforts could not ignore petitions and requests that, while they were connected to traditional cultural and religious values, were operating in a strikingly new social and political context.

⁴⁵ Povolo, *L'intrigo*, pp. 171–74.

increasingly harsh, deeply influenced the administration of criminal justice and firmly separated it from local feuds.⁴⁶

This was a profound transformation that over the course of several decades led to the creation of an extraordinary form of administration of justice that was an expression not only of state power but also, above all, of the demands of important sectors of society for a new conception of social order. These transformations clearly influenced the cultural dimension of violence and justice⁴⁷ and gave rise to entirely new figures in the realm of criminality: the violent nobleman addicted to violence and oppression, and the outlaw permanently denied any possibility of reintegration into society and doomed to be the prey of bounty hunters.

An Intermediate Scene (Approximately 60 Years Earlier)

28 December 1552, Malo, A Village about Twenty Kilometers North of Vicenza

The events of this day would be remembered for decades to come, both by members of the nobility of Vicenza, who had extensive landholdings in the area, and by the peasants, artisans, and merchants who lived in the village.

The anger exploded unstoppable, like a raging river at flood, through the narrow streets of the small village, rushing and battering the walls of the mighty palazzo and dovecote where members of the urban nobility had found refuge moments after rashly attacking and wounding the two sons of Bortolamio Cadin, a wealthy silk merchant who lived in the village.

The palazzo was rapidly encircled by a seething mob intent on settling the score with the men who had sought safety within its walls. The threatening confusion of attackers' cries was accompanied by, and almost synchronized with, the incessant clanging of the tocsin. Within just a few moments the sound of the bell, which usually warned the village inhabitants of imminent danger, had gathered a few hundred people around the palazzo of the noble Cavazzola family.

⁴⁶ Povo, *Dall'ordine*, pp. 54–76.

⁴⁷ For Europe, see Pieter Spierenburg, *A History of Murder: Personal Violence in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 43–64.

Fury and resentment fused into an explosive brew that probably no one could have stopped or contained. In the hours that followed, the villagers' determination in laying siege demonstrated that this was truly a day of reckoning. Bundles of wood and other easily flammable materials were stacked all around the palazzo, and toward evening, smoke and flames rose ominously to the sky, enveloping the walls of the dovecote and the ancient palace.

The easily predictable outcome of these events was marked by the deaths of four men who had attempted a sortie that was as pointless as it was desperate.

The city of Vicenza quickly stepped in with its judges but also informed Venice of the events. Within just a few days, the Council of Ten, the powerful supreme magistracy of Venice, decided to take over the case and to arrest those it held to have been responsible for the uprising. The trial ended after several months with one death sentence and the banishment and confiscation of goods of those who, while summoned, never appeared in Venice.

Looking beyond the episode that sparked the sudden violence, the revolt took place in a conflict-riven atmosphere characterized by the clear abuse of power by some members of the nobility. In documents submitted to justify what had happened, the men of the community of Malo pointed to the history of oppressive tyrannies inflicted on the inhabitants of the village as the reason behind the peasant uprising, tyrannies that infringed on the rights of the community itself and damaged the honor of the women and their families. Faced with these noble tyrannies, the community unequivocally claimed its right of resistance, which, in some cases, could even justify an unusual and violent reaction against those who had violated its customs and the honor of its inhabitants.

The 1552 revolt of Malo was an expression of the powerful tensions that were beginning to become noticeable around this time in economic and financial matters. The emergence of social groups that not only were not closely dependent on the aristocracy but also were seeking social and political visibility and honorable social status, revealed the crisis of the traditional legal system and of the political dominance of the cities over their rural territories. Venice eventually satisfied the urgent requests emanating from some sectors of rural society to establish new representational bodies (the *Territori*) in order to redefine the traditional relationship between the cities and their respective rural territories.

It is significant that a man named Bortolamio Pasqualin, who had suggested and organized the new Vicentine territorial institution approved

by Venice in 1550, was later unjustly accused by the nobility of having taken part in the Malo uprising. Pasqualin, acting as the community's lawyer, had defended certain rights enjoyed by Malo since the beginning of the 16th century, which the urban noblemen who owned large properties in village had cunningly brought into question. The dispute lasted for several years, and, in the end, the community's legal claims based on custom were defeated by the nobility's legal stratagems. Bortolamio Pasqualin, like other like-minded men in these years, saw that the ancient legal system based on tradition was no longer able to reflect the complexity of the rural world, subject as it was by tradition to the city and the superiority of the city's statutes. It was necessary to take action in order to recalibrate the balance of power with the aristocracy and to obtain from Venice new legislation that was not rooted in the traditional relationship between city and countryside.⁴⁸

The Legal System in the Venetian State

With the formation of the *stato da mar*, first, and then following the rapid territorial expansion on the mainland in the 15th century, the legal and political structures of the Republic of Venice became increasingly varied and complex. In the numerous urban centers along the jagged Adriatic coast and on islands in the Mediterranean local statutes, customs, and Roman law mingled with Venetian law and the discretion (*arbitrium*) of Venetian representatives in various ways depending on the situation. But the legal situation in the extensive mainland territories was characterized from the beginning by a notable separateness from Venice. In the large urban centers of the Veneto and Lombardy plains, the presence of political and legal institutions that were deeply rooted in history and tradition, and given legitimacy by the local statutes that Venice had reconfirmed, was also guaranteed by the *ius comune* and by the colleges of jurists and judges that turned to that law whenever it was necessary to supplement local statutes. There was no trace of Venetian law in any of these urban centers, large or small, and the representatives periodically sent from Venice were firmly required to respect the local statutes and the spirit of the Roman law of Justinian.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ For these events, see Claudio Povolo, *L'uomo che pretendeva l'onore. Storia di Bortolamio Pasqualin da Malo (1502–1591)* (Venice, 2010), pp. 21–30.

⁴⁹ Claudio Povolo, "Un sistema giuridico repubblicano: Venezia e il suo stato territoriale (secoli XV–XVIII)," in Italo Birocchi and Antonello Mattone, eds., *Il diritto patrio tra diritto comune e codificazione (secoli XVI–XIX)* (Rome, 2006), pp. 335–53.

This legal and political separateness of the mainland appeared even more obvious when looked at in light of the distinctive Venetian legal system. While Venetian statutes and customs had originated in the shared framework of Roman law, they had been decisively shaped by the city's merchant and mercantile character. The essential pragmatism of Venetian law was also accentuated both by its customary nature and by its open hostility to the intervention of jurists that was normal elsewhere. In cases not anticipated by statute or custom, Venetian judges were expressly urged to use their own discretion, while in other major Italian cities judges were required to rely on the *ius comune* and its distinctive technical-legal structure. This was important, given that in the city on the lagoon the patricians who served as judges were the same men who monopolized political office, a direct overlap between justice and politics that had no equivalent in the majority of European states.

The structure of the jurisdictional state of the Middle Ages and *ancien régime*, however, was capable of overcoming this diversity and of making the relationships between the large ruling cities and their heterogeneous domains operate smoothly. This quality was particularly important in the case of Venice, because it was a large ruling city that was also a mercantile aristocratic republic which found itself ruling a territory made up mostly of large cities that were themselves also republics.⁵⁰ Even as the magistracies of this ruling city notably increased their activity, the structures of the jurisdictional state remained essentially unchanged, particularly the institutional framework created with the formation of the *dominium*. As in other north-central Italian states, the relationship between the ruling and subject cities was characterized as cooperation, and the subject cities maintained unaltered their laws, local cultures, and hierarchies.

Beginning in the second half of the 16th century, economic and social changes compelled Italian and European states to take more incisive action with respect to their subject territories, a phenomenon that has been well studied. The Republic of Venice, as discussed above, also followed this path. If the creation of new magistracies—importantly, for example, the *Provveditori ai beni inculti*, which reflected a different perception and use of the territory—was the result of the remarkable economic growth of the 16th century, it was the rise of new social groups and the intensification of conflicts that led the ruling class of Venice to intervene more

⁵⁰ Claudio Povolo, "Honour and *virtù* in a Sixteenth Century Aristocratic City," in G. Beltrami, ed., *Andrea Palladio and the Architecture of Battle, with the Unpublished Edition of Polybius' Histories* (Venice, 2009), pp. 258–60.

forcefully in their dominions.⁵¹ Criminal jurisdiction, as we have seen, was substantially modified, and in civil justice the magistracies of the ruling city became more attractive. Tensions with the subject cities and their ruling classes became inevitable and also led to showdowns, as in the case of the Interdict.⁵² Most importantly, in the *terraferma* the Venetian legal system interfered with that of the subject cities by adding laws and especially legal precedents that undermined the *ius commune* and customs. The *terraferma* legal system both expressed and upheld the class-based society centered on honor and privilege. Thus, as that legal system weakened, the time-honored patronage and friendship relationships centered on local nobilities and their powerful lineages weakened as well. At the same time, Venetian patricians stepped in with their political privileges to extend their own influence by strengthening patronage relationships with the other social classes of the *terraferma*. During the 17th century, every settlement of any size had privileged relationships with protectors, influential Venetian patricians, who primarily served as mediators with the Venetian magistracies. In this way, through patronage relationships, the importance of the *piccola patria* [small homeland] paradoxically was to grow in an ideological sense, although with different political relationships than those which had characterized the early phase of the creation of the Venetian territorial state.

In the Republic of Venice, the legal and political transformations begun in the final decades of the 16th century were thus destined, in the centuries to come, to influence the very structure of the republican state in unprecedented ways.

A Scene from the 18th Century

A Restless Youth

The village of Paluzza in Carnia (northern Friuli), 9 September 1775. On this day in September, community leaders met to address a delicate issue that could no longer be put off. They needed to deal with Pietro Englaro, a village youth who had long shown a marked impatience with

⁵¹ Michael Knapton, "Tra Dominante e Dominio (1517–1630)," in Gaetano Cozzi, Michael Knapton, and Giovanni Scarabello, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*, vol. 1: *Dal 1517 alla fine della Repubblica* (Turin, 1992), pp. 429–65.

⁵² Gaetano Cozzi, "Venezia nello scenario europeo (1517–1699)," in Cozzi, Knapton, and Scarabello, eds., vol. 1: *Dal 1517 alla fine della Repubblica*, p. 183.

the provisions for order and safety decided by the community. Back in 1754, during the festivities for the patron saint of the village, disorder had led to the death and injury of some of the inhabitants. The community had thus decided to prohibit public celebrations held in private houses. The only person who had broken this rule was Pietro Englaro, who in 1770 and again in 1775 not only openly violated the prohibition but even attacked the community leaders who rebuked him and enjoined him not to continue the practice on pain of punishment. But it had been no use. To the contrary, Englaro showed a stubborn inclination to fight, accompanied by more generally libertine and insolent behavior. He furthermore lodged in his house vagabonds and idlers who were generally thought to be responsible for the numerous thefts that had been taking place in the village. The community representatives held that this state of affairs had to end and decided to ask the Venetian representative at Udine to intervene and take vigorous steps against Pietro Englaro.⁵³

Events like these in Paluzza in September 1775 also occurred in other settlements in the Veneto and Lombardy plains, and from across the region the authorities received requests for intervention against individuals, particularly young men, who had proven unable to follow the rules established to ensure public tranquility or who displayed attitudes antithetical to community values. These requests finally compelled the Venetian Senate to take action against these so-called *malviventi*, those who, according to the resulting law, were reluctant to work to obtain their daily bread and were instead given over to vice and loose living. The law thus channeled the demands for a social and public order hostile to attitudes that might threaten the tranquility of the community.⁵⁴ These entreaties evidently came from groups of notables who were no longer willing to tolerate the irreverent or threatening behavior that had long been a part of communal rituals and festivities. This was an irruption of the private

⁵³ Claudio Povoio, "Uno sguardo rivolto alla religiosità popolare: l'inchiesta promossa dal Senato veneziano sulle festività religiose (1772–1773)," in S. Marin, ed., *Il culto dei santi e le feste popolari nella Terraferma veneta. L'inchiesta del Senato veneziano (1772–1773)* (Vicenza, 2007), pp. lv–lix.

⁵⁴ On a new perception of certain youthful attitudes in England beginning in the last decades of the 18th century, see Peter King, *Crime and Law in England, 1750–1840: Remaking Justice from the Margins* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 106–08. For Venice, see Francesca Meneghetti Casarin, *I Vagabondi: La società e lo stato nella repubblica di Venezia alla fine del '700* (Milan, 1985); and for Germany, Hans Medick, "Village Spinning Bees: Sexual Culture and Free Time among Rural Youth in Early Modern Germany," in H. Medick and D. W. Sabean, eds., *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984).

that collided with the old world of custom, which had one of its most important moments in the celebration of festival rites.⁵⁵

This phenomenon is clearly apparent in the 1770s and 1780s, but its origins went back to the transformations of the 17th century, which can be seen clearly in the activity of the courts in charge of maintaining that public order and which was so clearly different from the peace-based order that had so deeply marked medieval and early modern society with cultural values such as honor and friendship. The shift, or really the definitive end, occurred in the last two decades of the 17th century, when, in a series of extraordinarily important laws, the Council of Ten more firmly took control over certain violent crimes, such as murder or wounding someone, crimes that had for centuries been under the jurisdiction of local courts, or, in Venice itself of the criminal *Quarantia*.⁵⁶ Control of the most violent manifestations of feud were thus removed from local courts and the ancient mechanisms that had regulated them for centuries. This series of new laws was certainly undertaken in response to petitions from below and in the wake of a new cultural sensibility⁵⁷—a sensibility disposed to perceive differently the core values of honor and friendship and, consequently, also custom.⁵⁸

A Closing Scene

The Night of the Locusts

Bergamo, the upper town, the night between 2 and 3 October 1793. There were many witnesses to the extraordinary spectacle on the tumultuous and unforgettable night when the former *podestà* Ottavio Trento took his inglorious leave of the city at the end of his term of office. But Giuseppe Recuperati, the bishop's chancellor, could testify even at a distance of many months, that he still vividly remembered what happened then. He had watched with attention the opening skirmishes in that pitiless but memorable drama: Trento's descent down the great Pretorio staircase, thoughtfully attended by his successor Nicolò Corner; their passage

⁵⁵ Daniel Fabre, "Famiglie. Il privato contro la consuetudine," in P. Ariès and G. Duby, eds., *La vita privata dal Rinascimento all'Illuminismo* (Rome/Bari, 1987), pp. 447–51.

⁵⁶ Povo, *Retoriche giudiziarie*, pp. 23–32.

⁵⁷ Dinges, *The Use of Justice*, pp. 171–73.

⁵⁸ See the discussion of this term in Herman Roodenburg, "Social Control Viewed from Below: New Perspectives," in Roodenburg and Spiernburg, eds., *Social Control in Europe*, 1: 151–55; and in Povo, *Uno sguardo*, pp. xliii–lix.

through the suppressed murmuring of the throng barely managing to contain its anger; the rowdy catcalls and hissing that alternated with applause accompanying the men's entrance into the palace; the crowd's sudden and worrying silence; the two patricians' exit and sudden withdrawal as if burned by the abusive cries that met them; and finally, Trento's rapid flight through a back door that opened off the courtyard, where two carriages waited with an escort of soldiers. *Recuperati* remembered all this very well, as well as what happened next. Despite the pitch blackness, he had glimpsed the crowd break through the gates that the soldiers tried in vain to close; and the two carriages were surrounded, pressed, and pursued by a rabid fury that the thick darkness of night seemed to make one with the slow yet frantic tread of the horses along the road they had to take to descend from the upper town and exit the walls toward Venice. The chancellor had clearly seen the objects (as well as the insects and other almost unnamable things) that the angry throng had thrown in an inglorious sendoff for the departing rector. And he had also heard the hostile shouts sent after the *podestà* in thanks for the conflict-riven period of his government. Despite everything, the small, reviled procession laboriously descended to the lower part of the city, accompanied by a thick hail of stones. But then suddenly, while the carriage carrying the servants continued on toward the walls of Sant'Agostino, where the gate led toward Venice, the one carrying Trento abruptly turned toward the Osio gate, which opened in the opposite direction toward Crema, and in this way avoided the gathering mob that was waiting to bid him one last vicious farewell.

With the image of a coach speeding away into the night along a road weakly lit by flaming beacons, the troubled period of the government of the *podestà* Ottavio Trento came to a close. That night revealed resentments, discontents, and contradictions that inevitably were catalyzed by the figure of a man who, over the course of about a year and a half, had ruled the city by provoking tension and conflict. As the investigation undertaken by the Council of Ten would ascertain, the hundreds who had patiently waited for the moment of the *podestà*'s departure, to show with striking brutality the entire community's disapproval of his actions, had symbolically enacted, in a sort of cathartic ritual sacrifice, reaffirmation of the customary bonds that linked the community as a whole to the power establishment of the ruling city. In so doing, they reminded Venice of the unwritten pact that confirmed respect for the established and apparently immutable social balance, as well as for a governance that tended toward mediation.

The Council of Ten's investigation ascertained how Trento, from the earliest months of his tenure, had directed his energies toward ending what he held were widespread abuses and irregularities in most of the institutions of city government, abuses skillfully perpetuated above all by the class of local court personnel who acted at the edges of legality. His invasive actions ignored the deep-rooted social and political equilibria of the city and were also politically imprudent by avoiding any form of mediation. In the end, this imprudence impelled the Council of Ten to severely restrain his activities.⁵⁹

The challenging of the *podestà* of Bergamo symbolically represents the state of the relationship between the ruling city and subject cities in the final stage of the life of the Republic. And it indicates indirectly the complexity of the political and legal relationships/connections as they developed over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Particularly beginning in the last decades of the 16th century, the Venetian legal system, as we have seen, underwent important transformations. Legislation—at first mostly criminal and procedural but later also, to a degree, aimed at regulating administration and civil justice—reshaped the power relationships between the ruling and subject cities. This phenomenon occurred to one degree or another in almost all the countries of Europe, but in the Republic of Venice its particularly distinctive political and ideological implications set in motion a political drama that would not end until the fall of the Republic.

The imposition of Venetian law on the various parts of its domain was never explicit and took place, for the most part, within a framework of formal respect for the ancient institutional systems and without any real involvement on the part of the subject ruling groups. The political predominance of the Venetian patriciate and of the republican institutions of the great ruling city remained an insurmountable barrier to such involvement, despite an intense process of cooptation of wealthy *terraferma* families into the Venetian patriciate during the last two decades of the Republic. Venice, the ancient city-state with the face of a republic, nonetheless had to assert its authority, although reluctantly, over a considerable part of its dominions, where a myriad of large and small republics

⁵⁹ Claudio Povoło, "Il processo a Ottavio Trento, cartina di tornasole dei conflitti sociali," in M. Cattini and M. A. Romani, eds., *Storia economica e sociale di Bergamo. Il tempo della Serenissima. Settecento, età del cambiamento* (Bergamo, 2006), pp. 289–90.

still flourished, whose ideological and cultural reference point right up to the end remained the *ius comune*.⁶⁰

Unable to redefine itself at the level of institutions and power hierarchies, the Venetian legal system, provided with a different form of political legitimacy and new legal reference points, unmistakably displayed some weaknesses in the areas of legitimacy and consensus. On the one hand, the new legislation and the control exercised by the Venetian courts expressed the absolute necessity of responding to social demands by intervening in areas that had been under the jurisdiction of the subject cities since ancient times. On the other hand, however, the transformation in governance was unable to leave behind the established practice of mediation and embrace a different conception of the state. This process would be even more clearly evident at the end of the 17th century, when, as we have seen, the Council of Ten, using a series of incisive laws, intensified its control over the courts of its domain and over the *Quarantie* themselves. This tightening up, however, did not involve the participation of the ruling classes of the subject cities and, in contrast, was accompanied, almost as a form of compensation, by an emphasis on their ancient jurisdictions and prerogatives.

As it was reformulated starting in the late 16th century, the Venetian legal system led to a more direct confrontation between the law of the ruling city and the more varied law of the subject cities. This confrontation,

⁶⁰ For the concept of *repubblica* in political thought, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols, vol. 1: *The Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1978). When Venice extended its influence over the territorial state it had earlier acquired, its own republican nature could no longer be understood simply in the traditional sense of a city-state ruled by an aristocracy but had to be considered primarily as a particular type of state power structure that differed significantly from a monarchy or principality in the governing methods and power relationships that would be consolidated in the modern period. For an important example of this, see Michael P. Breen, *Law, City and King: Legal Culture, Municipal Politics, and State Formation in Early Modern Dijon* (Rochester, N.Y., 2007), pp. 206–26. Appeals to republican ideals, made frequently by the cities of the *ter-raferma* in the 17th and 18th centuries, were in reality nothing more than rhetoric intended to protect ancient privileges, which were constantly being challenged by intrusive and delegitimizing government; on such appeals, see Vittor I. Comparato, “From the Crisis of Civil Culture to the Neapolitan Republic of 1647: Republicanism in Italy between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in M. van Gelderen and Q. Skinner, eds., *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, vol. 1: *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2002), pp. 181–82. In Venice, the political discourse on republicanism referred exclusively to the power dynamics of the Venetian patriciate and its institutions; for this, see Vittorio Conti, “The Mechanisation of Virtue: Republican Rituals in Italian Political Thought in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in van Gelderen and Q. Skinner, eds., *Republicanism*, vol. 2: *The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 77–83.

however, did not entail an explicit affirmation of the preeminence of Venetian law over the *ius comune*, despite the fact that governing praxis, particularly in some sectors, underwent important changes.⁶¹

In this way, Venetian law reached the end of the Republic's long life festooned with ideological and mythical notions, but without the substantial legitimacy that alone could have bestowed on it the historical role of the law of the entire state. Inextricably linked to the ruling class of the lagoon, which for centuries ruled the Republic with great skill but also with a progressive and lucid awareness of the chronic weaknesses of their political prerogatives and status, the Venetian legal system could only find a *raison d'être* by turning to its past and to its myths.

At the end of its life, the Republic was an exceptionally fragmented state. On the one side was Venice, the great ruling city, endowed with political privileges; on the other were its domains on the mainland and the sea, which were extremely heterogeneous (large and small cities, rural communities, ecclesiastical and seigneurial jurisdictions...) and whose ruling classes were deprived of any opportunities for real political participation, yet at the same time protective of the political privileges granted to them during earlier centuries. Of course the true balance of power tipped decisively in favor of the ruling city and its most important courts. But the pieces of the legal story, traced ambiguously through hierarchies that are not clearly definable, suggest how the activity of governing could not ignore a governing praxis characterized by mediation and by friendship networks.⁶² Any other route was unfeasible and doomed to failure. As in 1793, to his great distress, Ottavio Trento had to find out for himself while governing the city of Bergamo.

⁶¹ Claudio Povolo, *Il sistema*, pp. 347–53.

⁶² Claudio Povolo, "The Creation of Venetian Historiography," in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), p. 501.

WAYFARERS IN WONDERLAND:
THE SEXUAL WORLDS OF RENAISSANCE VENICE REVISITED¹

Guido Ruggiero

Matteo Bandello tells the tale of a young noble from Lombardy who visited Venice in the 16th century to enjoy its already famous world of illicit sex.² Attracted by reports of its elite prostitutes, he sought out one of the most noted courtesans of the day, planning to buy her sexual services and enjoy the special cosmopolitan sins that the commercial city had to offer. But true to Bandello's dark vision and perhaps his Lombard antipathy for Venice, what had the potential to be a tale of pleasure became a cautionary tale on the dangers of Venice and that illicit world; for this youthful adventurer found that although the beautiful courtesan that he quickly fell madly in love with allowed him to visit her in her sumptuous lodgings along with her other suitors, she denied him her favors.

Tellingly, he discovered that those favors were not available merely for money; she choose who would enjoy them and who would not. In fact, one of the things that set courtesans apart at the time was their ability to choose only the best men as their lovers; thus making them, in a way,

¹ In 1985 I published a first overview of the topic for the 14th and 15th centuries, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York, 1985). The topic was revisited in the early 1990s with a more theoretical essay, "Marriage, Love, Sex, and Renaissance Civic Morality," in James Grantham Turner, ed., *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 10–30, and a broader book, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York, 1993) that reconsidered and expanded into the 16th century the discussion of sex in Renaissance Venice and beyond, while considering a wider range of topics as well. Over the last decade and a half, I have continued to publish on the topic a number of articles more focused on prostitution, sodomy, and the illicit world of sex in the Renaissance, as well as a book with a broader Renaissance focus, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 2007). Over the same span of time a number of important works by other scholars studying Venice have enriched our understanding of the sexual life of the city; although all those studies cannot be cited here, readers can find most of those not cited in what follows discussed in my earlier studies along with a more general bibliography and discussion of sex in the Italian Renaissance. This essay then revisits that work and attempts to present a broad overview of the topic from a Venetian perspective while adding hopefully some new insights and suggestions.

² Matteo Bandello, *Le quattro parti de le Novelle del Bandello*, ed. Gustavo Balsamo-Crivelli (Turin, 1924), part 3, *novella* 31.

arbiters of gentlemanly ways and status.³ Our young Lombard found then that his own fat purse gained him entrance to her circle of admirers, but unfortunately that was about all. For as Bandello notes disapprovingly, “she . . . seeing him richly dressed and looking like a man ready to spend realized that he was a pigeon ready for plucking; thus, she began to play him, making eyes at him and giving him many sweet looks.”⁴ Remarking that if his young compatriot had stuck with sensible Lombard prostitutes rather than going off to Venice for his sexual adventures, he would have satisfied his desires without problems, Bandello spins out the tale of this young wayfarer’s weeks of ever more dispirited waiting, wooing, and shell-ing out his wealth to a Venetian courtesan.

In the end, with his purse empty and little to show for it beyond a kiss or two, the youth, depressed and dishonored, decided to make the ultimate gesture to demonstrate his heroic love, his true honor, and her cruel ways. He returned one last time to her luxurious residence and there before her and her other suitors threatened to commit suicide by drinking poison unless she accepted his suit. Haughtily Venetian to the last, from Bandello’s perspective, she turned the young man down flat, and he downed his poisonous drink. But from a Renaissance perspective, the worst was yet to come; for his poison did not act immediately, and thus even it denied him his planned dramatic, ennobling death before his cruel non-mistress. For, seeing him apparently unharmed, she, “thinking it a

³ It appears that the most prominent courtesans had one or a small group of high-status lovers who kept them; their support allowed them to live richly and be quite selective in the other clients they choose. For this and a more extended discussion of the tale, see Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, pp. 38–40; see also the general overview provided by *Il gioco dell’amore: Le cortigiane di Venezia dal Trecento al Settecento* (Milan, 1990), especially Giovanni Scarabello, “Le ‘signore’ della repubblica,” pp. 11–35. A more anecdotal and traditional vision of Venetian courtesans can be found in Antonio Barzaghi, *Donne o cortigiane? La prostituzione a Venezia documenti di costume dal XVI al XVIII secolo* (Verona, 1980) and Rita Casagrande di Villaviera, *Le Cortigiane venetiane nel Cinquecento* (Milan, 1968). For a similar vision of Rome, see Tessa Storey, “Courtesan Culture: Manhood, Honour and Sociability,” in Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, ed., *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy* (Surrey, 2009), pp. 247–73. But see also the numerous studies of apparently more humble courtesans in Rome by Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, for example their *Love and Death in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 2004), and *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trails before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto, 1993), and the works cited there; and for a similar perspective in Florence, see Maria Serena Mazzi, *Prostituzione e lenoni nella Firenze del Quattrocento* (Milan, 1991). See also the classic by Paul Larivaille, *La vie quotidienne des courtesans en Italie au temps de la renaissance* (Paris, 1975). An excellent overview of the courtesan’s arts from a broad comparative perspective is offered in Martha Fledman and Bonnie Gordon, eds., *The Courtesan’s Arts: Cross Cultural Perspectives* (New York, 2006).

⁴ Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, p. 39.

joke, [just] laughed." And with that demeaning laughter ringing in his ears he slunk home to die "without anyone noting it."⁵ A dead giveaway—for the youth's noble love and "heroic" gesture went unnoted, leaving only his death and dishonor at the hands of a Venetian courtesan along with Bandello's cautionary tale of the evils dangers of the illicit world of Venetian sex for unwary wayfarers.

Bandello's negative vision of Venice comes through clearly in this tale. Yet, at the same time it underlines a widely shared contemporary perception that the sexual life of the city, especially its world of illicit sex, made it a special place and an attraction that was particularly alluring, especially for young men. Of course, this was in its own way just another aspect of the Renaissance myth of Venice that has been so extensively studied for its political and social dimensions. But concomitant with the celebration of the city as a unique polity and society, there existed a developing myth of Venice as a pleasure city that attracted wayfarers from across Europe that would grow yet greater with time. Bandello's tale, however—where nothing rings quite as one might expect—with its strangely selective prostitute, her bevy of suitors rather than clients, and her would-be lover victim leaves one wondering what realities stood behind that developing myth in Renaissance Venice. What were its sexual practices, how did they interrelate with the more famed illicit sexual world or worlds of the city, and how unusual was its sexual life in the context of other Italian Renaissance cities?

Studying the sexual life of Renaissance Venice one finds many things that at first sight seem quite familiar and that might lead one to think that there is little to be said about the history of sex in the city. But as one begins to look more closely at everyday sexual practice and the worlds of illicit sex there, to return to a metaphor that I used in *The Boundaries of Eros* now more than 25 years ago, one begins to feel rather like Alice in Wonderland: things appear to be familiar, but on closer examination they keep turning out to be not quite what they seem.⁶ In a way rather

⁵ Ibid., p. 40.

⁶ Michel Foucault and his followers in many ways set the agenda for the study of the history of sex in the West; see his seminal work, *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1990), originally published in French in 1976. One of his most controversial claims was that there was no sex before the modern period, when modern disciplines defined and at the same time disciplined our modern conception of it. This brief summary hardly does justice to the complexity of his position, but in some ways it might be argued that it was less radical than it seems. In fact, if we accept the idea that sex and sexual practice are not simple biological givens but also involve cultural constructs

like Bandello's young wayfarer, but from a more modern point in time, we too find ourselves wayfarers in wonderland, where wonder in its classic meaning invokes a sense of strangeness and disorientation before what at first seems familiar, much as was the case for Lewis Carroll's Alice. And although we perhaps may not be so easily fooled into believing Venetian courtesans will perform like Lombard prostitutes, there are a host of things that at first seem simple and familiar in Renaissance Venice that, when looked at more closely, evoke this sense of wonder, some things merely strange, some more challenging and troubling. So, in a way, in seeking to understand sex in Renaissance Venice, we too, like Bandello's unnamed Lombard, will be wayfarers in wonderland.

Perhaps the best place to begin is by looking at another literary text apparently written in the first half of the 16th century in Venice by an anonymous author who claimed it was true, based on actual events. This comedy, *La veniexiana*, although never performed and not discovered until recently, is particularly interesting for its graphic portrayal of the sexual desires and practices of two noble Venetian women, Angela, a young widow, and Valiera, a young newlywed, and the love object they fight over, Giulio, a young upper-class dandy from Milan—yet another wayfarer in what he hoped would be for him the sexual wonderland of Venice.⁷ He, like Bandello's unhappy hero, came to Venice seeking sexual pleasure and, like him, was prepared to pay for it. But his highest desire was that his youthful good looks and mannerly ways would win him the love of a more difficult prize, a Venetian noblewoman. And, in fact, he had encountered at a party at a convent a young newlywed Venetian of the highest rank, Valiera who had captured his heart. But already one is struck by the sensation that we are on the wrong side of the looking glass. For what, one might well ask, was Giulio doing falling in love at a convent party? Were not convents supposed to be places of withdrawal from the world, where virgin brides of Jesus served God? Certainly they should not

that interpret and make sense of a diverse range of passions, emotions, and biological "givens," it becomes clear that there can be a history of those constructs and that they were not always seen as they are seen today. From that perspective we are, in the end, saying much the same thing that Foucault claimed without, however, necessarily accepting his hypothesis that modern disciplines were the key to the way we see sex today. For a fuller discussion of my vision of Foucault's theories on sex, see Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love*, especially pp. 6–8, 19–21 and relevant notes. For a thoughtful rethinking of Foucault's ideas on the subject by one of his leading followers, see David Halperin, *How to do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago, 2002) especially the essay, "Forgetting Foucault," pp. 24–47.

⁷ *La veniexiana* [*The Venetian Comedy*], in Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero, ed. and trans., *Five Comedies From the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 2003), pp. 285–321.

have been the sites of festive gatherings where a young foreigner could find young Venetian noblewomen at play and courting. We will return to such convents later in this essay, but for now the point is that in the wonderland that young Giulio sought, things sexual were not quite as they might at first seem or we might expect from a modern perspective.

A similar question might be asked about the noble Valiera who had attracted Giulio's love. What was a young newlywed doing flirting with foreigners in the first place, never mind at a convent party? According to the ideal of marriage in Renaissance Venice, and the Renaissance more generally, she should have been safely locked up at home pregnant or, better yet, already raising the children that would be her contribution to her husband and her marital family. Her days of youthful parties, in theory always limited and carefully chaperoned, should have ended with her marriage to an older, powerful, and important noble, referred to simply in the comedy as "the old lord." Yet Valiera's youth and her husband's reported old age open a window on another significant and slightly off-kilter reality of the sexual life of Renaissance Venice, marriage. Marriage, of course, was the institution that prescriptive literature and Christian theology saw as the ideal place for sex, for the "yoke of matrimony," as it was often referred to at the time, disciplined the dangerous passions associated with sexual desire and provided the nucleus of the family that would raise and support the children produced by the "correct" use of sex.⁸ According to Christian theology, within marriage those passions were so carefully contained in fact that they might not even quite fit the label of sex. Theologians following in the footsteps of Church Fathers such as St Augustine had long held that sexual intercourse within marriage was for procreation alone and was governed by the doctrine of marital debt. As a debt or service without passion or pleasure beyond the pleasure of meeting God's goal of reproducing and filling the earth, the marital debt was hardly sex at all but, rather, a form of contractual obligation. From this perspective, what might be seen as the home of correct sex, marriage, even in the physical intercourse of partners, ideally at least was more about duty than the erotic.

⁸ For a brief discussion of the yoke of matrimony see Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 14–15; for a quick overview of the more general vision of the marital unit as the social and moral base of society in the renaissance see Ruggiero, "Marriage, Love and Sex," especially pp. 10–16. For a more general discussion, see Daniela Lombardi, *Matrimoni di antico regime* (Bologna, 2001); and Joanne Ferraro's overview essay "Family and Clan in the Renaissance World," in Guido Ruggiero, ed., *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 173–87.

Already sex in marriage seems to be sliding away from modern ways of seeing marriage.⁹ But moving beyond prescriptive literature and Christian ideals, in Venice as in most other Renaissance cities, sexual relationships within marriage were colored by a number of very important social customs that also made marriage a rather different institution from the modern one that goes by the same name. Tellingly Valiera is described as “young” and her husband “old” and therein lies a tale. Upper class brides in renaissance Venice were usually married shortly after they reached puberty between approximately 12 and 15 years of age.¹⁰ Much beyond 15, an upper-class woman began to become less marriageable and risk becoming a “*zitella*,” a Venetian term indicating a woman who was unmarried and perceived as unmarriageable. Many factors stood behind this early marriage age. Perhaps most importantly, there was a general fear that once young girls reached puberty they were dominated by strong and hard-to-control passions that were seen as sexual. If they acted on those passions outside of wedlock, they lost that special sexual distinction, virginity, that was seen as a virtual necessity for a first marriage for an upper-class woman. Part of what stood behind this was the general concern that non-virgin brides could contaminate the husband’s lineage with children that were not his if she came to a marriage already pregnant by another man. Adding to this concern was a widespread notion that in intercourse where conception occurred, a woman supplied merely the matter—usually seen as drawn from her menstrual blood—while the male provided the form—which was contained in his semen.¹¹ Thus a wife impregnated by another man was not only breaking a family line of descent but also introducing literally the very form of another family.

⁹ Yet in Catholic theology and lying behind more fundamentalist visions of marriage and sex within marriage, the marital debt still obtains as an ideal and still explains how sex in marriage can be without sin. Of course, some theologians and most prescriptive literature in the Renaissance allowed the idea that some physical pleasure might be enjoyed in sexual relationships within marriage, as long as the partners kept to the fore the real purpose of sexual intercourse.

¹⁰ For a discussion of when puberty occurred in the Renaissance see Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 13–14, 148–53. See also, for age distinctions relating to marriage, Laura Giannetti, *Lelia’s Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy* (Toronto, 2009); and for a comparative perspective, see Konrad Eisenbichler, ed., *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society 1150–1650* (Toronto, 2002). See also n. 18 below.

¹¹ For this see Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 28–46; and Valeria Finucci, *The Manly Masquerade: Masculinity, Paternity, and Castration in the Italian Renaissance* (Durham, N.C., 2003).

Such fears were reinforced by being incorporated in an elaborate code of honor that turned on a number of sexual issues as well. A young woman who indulged her youthful passions and engaged in premarital sex not only lost her honor but also undermined the honor of her whole family. Fathers and brothers were especially concerned to protect their family honor and thus watched closely the young women of the family, attempting to marry them as soon as possible to avoid potential family dishonor. Sexual honor also had a direct role to play in one of the crucial problems for upper-class families and, in fact, families across the board in Venice: the dowry. Dowries were required to marry daughters at virtually all social levels.¹² And if there were doubts about the virginity of a daughter, higher dowries were often required to overcome such concerns. More immediately, however, for upper-class families, given the sexual imperative to marry daughters quickly after puberty, dowries had to be raised and paid out with relative alacrity. This problem was compounded by the rapid rise in the cost of dowries across the 15th century and into the 16th as Venetian society became more and more aristocratic. A large dowry raised on short order for a daughter of marriageable age became a "public" marker of superior status and honor and being able to pay the price to marry into another high status family was crucial in this context. This may have also enhanced the need to marry daughters young, for their youth, probable virginity, and attractiveness may have helped attract the attention of notable families willing to accept less in the form of a dowry. Certainly an older, less attractive daughter of more easily questioned virginity required more in terms of her dowry, her family status, or both to marry well.

One option regularly taken in the face of dowry pressures to preserve family honor was to marry daughters to Christ. Even entering a convent to become a nun and a bride of Christ required a dowry, but usually these were less costly, and often they could be paid more easily over time. This meant in turn that while some young women entered convents with a strong vocation, a sizable group did not, and it appears that in Venice at

¹² Stanley Chojnacki has produced a number of significant essays on Venetian dowries and their implications for marriage and gender; for his perhaps most important, see his *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore, 2000). For a discussion of the Venetian marriage market from a literary perspective, see Virginia Cox, "The Single Self: Feminist Thought and the Marriage Market in Early Modern Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48 (1995), 513–81; see also Daniela Hacke, *Women, Sex and Marriage in Early Modern Venice* (Aldershot, 2004). For a suggestive overview, see also Lombardi, *Matrimoni*; and from a legal perspective, see Thomas Kuehn, *Law, Family, and Women: Towards a Legal Anthropology of Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1991).

least, this reality led to a division among convents that most were well aware of—some convents were spiritual retreats from the world that lived up to the monastic ideal, others were less committed to the spiritual life, and a few were quite open and integrated into the social and sexual life of the city. The unnamed convent where Giulio first encountered Valiera at a party seems to fall into this latter category. In fact, it is reported that Venetians often took visitors to the city to visit the convents which were famed for their music, learned nuns, and glamorous parties. The rather dour and moralistic Venetian diarist, Girolamo Priuli, whose diaries record the last years of the 15th century and the first of the 16th, sums up the situation nicely, “I believe in this diary I have described enough . . . the dishonest life of these Venetian nuns, who being truly of noble blood and origin are most beautiful, delicate and filled with every *virtù* especially in song, playing and every other musical ability and in handicrafts . . . [such nuns are] famous to all foreigners, lords and others who have come to Venice for they are immediately taken to such convents to hear and admire their ability in music and also to see the most beautiful things made there with hand and needle.”¹³

Some were noted for more. Criminal documents reveal that at least 33 convents had one or more prosecutions for fornication there in the period 1350–1500, with nine being very active in such activities. The most famous or infamous convent Sant’Angelo di Contorta across the 15th century was involved in 52 prosecutions for sexual offenses that apparently involved most of the nuns and the abbess as well. Certainly its record was anomalous, but a close examination of the crimes prosecuted there and at other convents suggests that if quietly practiced, there was an acceptance in the city that at certain convents nuns were not locked away from the world or its sexual life. Rather, convents could be exciting centers of youthful courtship and upper-class contact between the sexes that played a significant role in the social and sexual life of the city, especially for the young.¹⁴ Again we find ourselves in wonderland.

¹³ Girolamo Priuli, *I Diarii*, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 24 (Bologna, 1912–33) part 3, vol. 4, pp. 33–34. Priuli remarks just before this text, “to tell the truth [there are] more than fifteen convents . . . which can be called public bordellos . . . with the greatest offense to God . . .”

¹⁴ For an extensive discussion of this see: Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 70–88, especially pp. 77–84. See also Gabriella Zarri, *Recinta: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 2000); and Jutta Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago, 1999).

Returning to marriage, marrying young, being a virgin, and requiring a large dowry meant also that marriages were seldom love matches or based on sexual attraction. In Venice as elsewhere, they were moments of interfamily alliance that were ideally arranged, usually by fathers or the most important male relatives of the two families that were uniting in a marriage alliance. Ideally the negotiations for a marriage also involved considerations of the match to be made, and both members of the couple had formal veto power over their families' desires that left some room for their own. In theory it could be hoped that this would mean that a certain affection would grow up between well-matched couples, and there is growing information to suggest that this was indeed the case for some. In turn, the criminal records report regularly accounts of young couples running off together to form love matches against their families' wishes, and ecclesiastical courts offer a number of cases where wives or husbands attempt to annul their marriages, claiming that their consent was forced by their families rather than given freely.¹⁵ But in fact, this meant that at upper social levels there was little anticipation that love and passionate desire would be a significant part of sexual relationships within marriage. The companionate ideal of marriage that made sex within marriage not just legitimate but meaningful and central to the emotional happiness of a couple is a largely modern ideal. In Renaissance Venice, sexual intercourse in marriage at best might be pleasurable for some and the minor sin that Boccaccio saw it being, although even he virtually never envisioned it as having much of anything to do with marriage.

This rather harsh picture is softened a bit if we leave the upper-class world of Valiera and her "old lord" husband behind to move down the social scale. For at lower social levels in Venice the yoke of matrimony, strange to say, was not so driven by desires to form social and economic alliances between families and thus had more potential to be an emotional alliance between partners that involved sex, pleasure, and passion. At lower class levels, women married later, and although they were still required to provide a dowry, they were usually seen as bringing more to

¹⁵ For adultery cases involving love, see Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 65–69; for dissolutions of marriage based on lack of consent with the implication that there was an ideal of love matches, see Joanne Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (New York, 2001), especially pp. 33–68. See also the interesting essays in Silvia Seidel Menchi and Diego Quaglioni, eds., *Matrimoni in dubbio: Unioni controverse e nozze clandestine in Italia dal XIV al XVIII secolo* (Bologna, 2001); and see the classic study by Gaetano Cozzi, "Padri, figli e matrimoni clandestine (metà sec. XVI—metà sec. XVIII)," *La Cultura* 15 (1976), 169–212.

a marriage, especially skills that might contribute to a family's survival. Marriages were often still arranged, but there was also more room for a form of courtship that allowed the individuals and families involved to evaluate how a pairing might work even at an emotional level. In fact, it seems that sex before marriage was often an option with young couples experimenting with sexual relationships, often in the name of love. Usually this turned on a declaration of love and a promise of marriage by the young man in return for sexual intercourse. If pregnancy occurred, in theory, the couple married. This probably followed similar patterns of premarital sex in the countryside—many lower-class workers were recent immigrants to Venice—and there family and neighbors usually stepped in to make sure that promises were kept. In a city like Venice, however, the criminal records demonstrate that at lower class levels especially, where larger family structures were weaker or nonexistent, it was relatively easy for young men to disappear if they decided not to honor their promise. Still, at this level of society from the 15th century on, we find in the Venetian criminal records much more discussion of love in marriage and many accounts of people running off from unhappy relationships to build new ones based on love and sexual attraction.¹⁶

While Valiera, as a young bride and a newlywed, was almost certainly not much older than 15, her husband, as noted earlier, was labeled "old." Old was a rather vague and relative term then as now, but in Venice for the upper classes it implied someone well along in their forties at the youngest and more likely someone quite a bit older.¹⁷ This suggests another aspect of marriage that made it a considerably different arrangement than one normally associates with the institution today. Husbands were significantly older than their spouses: at the upper class levels men usually had to wait to marry until their late twenties or early thirties and at lower class levels until their early twenties. This meant that at upper class levels the difference in age between spouses ranged from around 14 years and up to 20 years or more, while for the lower classes the disparity could be as few as three or four but was often more. Given high death rates in childbirth for women and significant rates of remarriage for upper-class men,

¹⁶ For this, see Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 70–88; and Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, pp. 24–129.

¹⁷ For age distinctions in Venice, see Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1980), pp. 130–34; and Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice*, pp. 227–43; for a more general discussion of old age, see Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love*, pp. 109–10, 122–25, 155–62, 203–205; and Creighton Gilbert, "When Did a Man in the Renaissance Grow Old?" *Studies in the Renaissance* 14 (1967), 7–32.

Valiera's "old" husband might well have been even older, as men at times remarried young women in their early teens when they were in their fifties or sixties. This great age gap created a different dynamic in marital relationships, especially in terms of sex.¹⁸ Valiera, although identified as recently married was already looking for a younger lover to satisfy her sexual desires. Like the young wives stuck with older lovers in many of Boccaccio's *novelle* (and in many other Renaissance literary texts), apparently she found his limited sexual capabilities unsatisfactory and was seeking a more passionate love and sexual pleasure elsewhere.

Thus, the handsome young dandy from Milan, Giulio, seemed to fit her sexual desires perfectly, but via adultery rather than marriage. Young Giulio, however, found himself the sexual target of not just Valiera but also of her neighbor, the young widow Angela, who had noted him passing back and forth before her neighbor's house attempting to court the former from the street, a typical ploy of young would-be-lovers at the time.¹⁹ For although she was a widow, she too was young, probably only in her late teens or early twenties, like many widows in Venice whose older husbands had passed away. As a relatively young woman largely on her own Angela was not resigned to living the rest of her years chastely dressed in black and saw in Giulio a perfect answer to her desires. As a foreign visitor, a wayfarer, she found him a particularly attractive potential lover, for she could enjoy him with the assurance that he would not linger or press her for additional favors for too long, thus endangering her reputation.²⁰

¹⁸ James C. Grubb in his *Provincial Families of the Renaissance: Private and Public Life in the Veneto* (Baltimore, 1996) suggests a considerably shorter age range for *gioventù* in cities of the Veneto; see pp. 4–6 and table 1, p. 221. Grubb's sample, however, is rather small and from a more heterogeneous social group; thus it may not accurately reflect the gap at upper-class levels discussed for Venice. This seems more likely when one considers that artisanal and lower class men included in his data often married at a younger age and women in those social categories tended to marry later, thus statistically reducing the gap. Moreover as such groups make up a larger portion of his sample, they also tend to shorten the age gap for the whole group. For a broader perspective on this, see: Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love*, pp. 228–29 n. 20 and for *gioventù* in general pp. 25–40. For a general discussion of the issues involved see Eisenbichler, ed., *The Premodern Teenager*.

¹⁹ As women, especially upper class women in Venice, were ideally limited to their homes aside from when they went to church (or perhaps an evening event at a convent or other relatively public place) and even then rarely alone, passing back and forth before the window of a woman to be wooed was a widely recognized and practiced form of courtship. In a way windows were for upper class Venetian women one of the few breaks in their domestic enclosure.

²⁰ Valiera, Angela's competitor for Giulio's favors, sums it up well, "Boys like this... are manna from heaven... And then he's a foreigner, which means that you can take your pleasure with him, and afterwards he'll leave town and no longer be underfoot." *La*

Angela therefore decided to aggressively beat out her younger neighbor Valiera and get what she wanted by sending the boatman Bernardo to pick up the youth and bring him to her. Such go-betweens were a regular and significant part of the Venetian life and illicit sex, often necessary to arrange meetings between men seeking sexual partners and women locked up in their homes, as in this case. When Angela's maid described the young man to Bernardo, her description is interesting, as again her potential lover does not quite fit what might be expected and we realize once more that we are beyond the looking glass in a Venetian wonderland, where the apparent givens of sex have again shifted away from the expected. Bernardo asks, "Tell me, what does this guy look like?" She replies, "He's a young fellow still without a beard, with a rosy face and black hair, dressed in silk and very finely."²¹ Later when Bernardo encounters the youth on the street, he considers his looks, "Is this him? Well let's see: his hair is in braids and he has that feminine air of a dandy. Shit it has to be him."²² Feminine airs, a dandy, without a beard, young Giulio hardly seems a storybook lover by modern standards. Yet in the literature of the day, warrior heroes and other apparently more masculine and forceful lovers are regularly eschewed for youthful, beardless, feminine lovers who are apparently so young and inexperienced that one irate older competitor in another comedy for a woman's favor remarks unhappily, "Good God! Is it possible? How could she want to be served by him? He's more fit for being screwed than for screwing."²³

This literary fascination with young lovers reflects another aspect of male age distinctions observed in Renaissance Venice and elsewhere that significantly colored sexual practice within marriage and outside of it as well. As noted earlier, upper-class men normally did not marry until their

venetiana, p. 301. Of course, this was literature, a domain where widows like Angela found it presumably easier to have such desires and act on them. Still, the widespread fear of widows' sexual desires and sexual activities in prescriptive literature and more playful literary forms such as comedies and *novelle*, suggest what is confirmed regularly in archival documents both criminal and civil in Venice—many widows did not pass the years of their widowhood chastely waiting for a new mate or in perpetual mourning.

²¹ *La venetiana*, p. 294.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

²³ These lines are spoken in the early 16th-century Italian comedy *The Deceived* (*Gl'ingannati*), written collectively by the Academy of the Intronati of Siena and published in translation in Giannetti and Ruggiero, *Five Comedies*, pp. 205–84, with this speech on p. 233. The character speaking these lines, the sexually aggressive Spanish soldier of fortune Giglio, is referring to the heroine of the comedy who, cross-dressed as a young boy, is serving the more mature young man she loves and, in order to win him away from another young woman, is seducing that woman with success, adding to Giglio's ire.

late twenties or early thirties. In part, this reflected economic, social, and political realities. In order to marry, most agreed that a man had to have achieved relative economic independence by gaining control of his own economic life either through inheritance or emancipation something that normally did not happen until the late twenties. Political power and social recognition of adult status also usually did not begin until this age and in some ways turned on getting married, creating a kind of circular relationship where marriage had to wait for maturity, and with marriage, maturity was recognized. But behind this economic, social, and political dynamic and intimately intertwined with it was a culturally constructed biological one—a widely shared vision of how males developed from childhood to adulthood. Giulio's beardless femininity alerts us to the complexities involved. Once a boy reached puberty or perhaps slightly before, he, like a young girl, was presumed to have lost his sexual innocence. But while a girl quickly became a woman via marriage and motherhood, a boy had a long period of youth to traverse before reaching adulthood. Often referred to at the time as *gioventù*, this period stretched until the late twenties or early thirties for upper-class males and until the early twenties for lower-class males. From 11 or 12 to their late teens, *giovani* [youths] were generally seen as passive socially, economically, and sexually—a passivity often associated with femininity. Physical signs of this that were regularly noted and discussed were beardlessness, a lighter and less muscular body, a higher voice, and a feminine quality that could even allow one to pass for a young woman. Giulio was carefully portrayed in the comedy as a youth at this stage of masculine development.

In fact, in his scene of love-making with the young widow Angela, it is she who takes the active role in their lovemaking. From the start he insists that he has come to her to “serve her” and be her “servant.” Such claims might be discounted as mere topoi from a Petrarchian or courtly love tradition, but Giulio acts on them or, to be more accurate, does not act. Angela takes the lead insisting on giving him the first kiss, offering to undress him, telling him what to do and to all this he replies, “Your ladyship needn’t worry. For now that I’m yours, your wish is my command.”²⁴ She responds, “Now that you are mine, I want to guard you so that no one will steal you. So I’ll hold you like this, tightly in my arms.”²⁵ And the relationship continues apace, but the closing lines of their night together

²⁴ *La venetiana*, p. 304.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

in bed are most telling: "Angela: 'Do you want to kiss me some more? Are you tired?'/ Giulio: 'You don't have to ask me for what is yours, Your Ladyship. You'll never find me tired when it comes to giving you pleasure.'/ Angela: '*Sleep*, close your eyes, because I want to do it my way.'/ Giulio: 'As long as I live, I'm here for you.'/ Angela: 'Put your arms like this.'/ Giulio: 'Your Ladyship will be uncomfortable.'/ Angela: '*Be quiet and sleep. I want to do it my way.*'"²⁶

"I want to do it my way" sums up nicely Angela's command of the situation, and her command to Giulio to sleep as she makes love to him confirms who the passive partner is in their relationship. Angela is the adult and Giulio is still the beardless and passive youth, attractive to her because she can command the situation. Encountered often in Renaissance literature, such attraction may also be tied to an androgynous ideal of beauty often seen in art as well, but it also seems to play on a finer more mannered vision of love and sex that found what were perhaps the more aggressive and violent norms of sexual relations with older males less attractive, especially for those who aspired to a more refined and mannerly life. Still, Giulio's feminine days would soon pass, and in his late teens as he developed a beard and a more muscular body associated with the more aggressive social and sexual behavior of adult males, it was assumed that he would become more active and aggressive.

As far as sex was concerned, that meant that when youths began to take an active role in sex, they would no longer be falling asleep and letting women like Angela take the lead in sex (at least in theory). At this later stage in their late teens, although they were still seen as *giovani*, they were supposed to begin to seek out more aggressively as the object of their desires either women or younger youths who were perceived as they had once been, feminine and passive. For young men of the lower classes, marriage normally followed fairly quickly, contingent upon being able to support a wife and a family. For upper-class males, as noted earlier, a longer wait was in order. In their late twenties or early thirties, with marriage, the ideal criteria for full adulthood were met and theoretically a male settled down to married life with his sexuality purely active while that of his much younger wife remained purely passive. In this way sexual intercourse assumed its correct and social placement, restricted and disciplined under the yoke of marriage. Yet such a marriage between a male of about 30 with considerable pre-marital sexual experience and a young

²⁶ Ibid., p. 307, italics mine; for this scene of lovemaking, pp. 303–307.

woman in her early teens with none created a relationship that was in sexual terms (and in many ways beyond the sexual) far removed from what we think of as marriage today.²⁷

Returning to Angela's desire for the feminine Giulio, he was not the only feminine object of her desire, for in a surprisingly explicit scene Angela's passions open a vista on another side of Renaissance sexuality beyond marriage in the broader *famiglia* or household. After learning of Giulio's love for her and aroused by the idea of "meeting" him privately, she goes to her servant Nena's room and starts complaining "I'm on fire and its burning me up." Once Nena understands that this is not a real fire or a fever, she realizes that what Angela needs is a man and asks "Are you thinking about some big, handsome forceful type?" But, of course, she is not; she is thinking of the young and feminine Giulio, "No, just a man who has the face of an angel, delicate golden features, straight from heaven." Nena, with a more lower-class vision of an ideal sexual partner, takes a while to see the youthful Giulio in this role, but with a sudden realization objects, "Heavens! Is it that sweet boy? What do you want to do with that sprig?"²⁸ Angela climbing into her servant's bed and demonstrating, makes perfectly clear what she wants, using her young female servant as a substitute for the feminine youth.

Servants as sexual objects of their master's desire were a regular feature of the sexual world of Renaissance Venice, especially as young women servants often lived with their upper-class masters and served at their and their family's pleasure.²⁹ Usually such relationships surface in reports of pregnant servants at the hands of male heads of household or their sons,

²⁷ In that marriage it was assumed that the male would take the sexual lead dominating his inexperienced sexual partner, and when that was not the case, court records reveal that occasionally surprised husbands sent their young wives back to their natal families claiming that their actions demonstrated that they were not virgins, a troubling moment echoed in Renaissance literature, suggesting how strong was the fear of young women who did not fit the passive ideal. For a literary example of this with a particularly insightful historical commentary, see in Lauro Martines, *An Italian Renaissance Sextet: Six Tales in Historical Context*, transl. Murtha Baca (Toronto, 2004), the novella "Ricciarda" (by Giovanni Gherardi da Prato), pp. 19–24, and his historical analysis, pp. 25–38. For an actual case of this in early 15th-century Venice, see Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 25–26.

²⁸ *La venexiana*, p. 290.

²⁹ One area of this that still needs further study in Venice is the victimization of young women who were adopted to serve as servants and often promised a dowry in return. Referred to as *filiae animae* (or *figliuole d'anima*), these young women suffered an unusually high percentage of sex crimes at the hands of their masters and their families; for this see: Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 150–52; for a brief discussion of the legal aspects, see Marco Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto comune e Veneto*, 2nd ed. (Venice, 1845), vol. 1, p. 48.

but in this case we see the kind of relationship that would have created virtually no record. And although it was clearly sexual from many perspectives, with kissing, fondling and much more suggested, it was a kind of physical contact that might be construed as merely friendship or a warm supportive relationship between women. The master/servant relationship in this case seems to belie this, but Nena appears to have been untroubled by the attentions of her mistress, aside from the fact that it interfered with her sleep. More significantly, the dialogue makes it clear that Angela saw it as more than mere friendship and if not sexual very close.³⁰ Tellingly she asks her servant, "Dear sweet, stay like this for a little; and then start to swear, so that I can pretend that you're a man."³¹ When Nena objects that "I don't know what to say!" Angela replies, "Swear on the body of Christ, say dirty words like men do... those dirty things they say in the bordello—you know."³²

Angela's desire that her servant imitate what men said in the bordello jumps us from the more private world of illicit sex within the household to the broader and more public world of illicit sex for which Venice was more famous—in many ways the wonderland that young Giulio and Bاندello's fellow Lombard sought in the city.³³ The most notable aspect of that world was undoubtedly prostitution. The noted diarist Marin Sanudo, who reported virtually everything that he saw as worth reporting in his massive diary (58 folio volumes in the modern edition) claimed that in the early 16th century there were 11,654 prostitutes working in Venice, almost certainly an exaggeration in a city whose population probably never

³⁰ For a discussion that opens new perspectives on such relationships, see the chapter "Woman with Woman: 'Ma che potrà succedermi se io donna amo una donna?'" in Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss*, pp. 76–112. See also the classic study by Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York, 1986), pp. 6–20.

³¹ *La venexiana*, p. 291.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 292. It is interesting to note that as she gets more excited, although still taking the active role, she appears to shift her fantasy to an imaginary male who is less innocent and feminine. This seems to suggest that the erotic audience of the scene was assumed to be older males who would find that this was an exciting, erotically charged fantasy for a young woman.

³³ I have discussed more extensively the world or, perhaps more accurately, worlds of illicit sex in Venice elsewhere. For this see Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, especially pp. 10–13, 146–68; *Binding Passions*, pp. 5–13, 33–55, 179–90; and "Marriage, Love and Sex," pp. 23–29. For a more general overview, see Ian Frederick Moulton, "The Illicit Worlds of the Renaissance," in Ruggiero, ed., *The Worlds of the Renaissance*, pp. 491–505. See also the works cited above in nn. 3 and 34.

surpassed by much 120,000 souls in the Renaissance.³⁴ But his was a telling exaggeration, for it suggests how ubiquitous and important Venetian prostitution was perceived as being at the time. Giulio, Bandello's character and many non-imaginary wayfarers as well, would have found in the city a wide range of prostitution in many ways reflecting the social and cultural hierarchies of the city.

Much below the level of Giulio's social pretensions there existed a large number of women (and younger males as well) who practiced the trade as necessity required, prostituting themselves to aid their families or merely to survive in a city where people at the bottom of society lived lives that were marginal in virtually every sense of the term. Although the law required prostitutes to be registered for tax purposes, these irregulars seldom were, and thus their practice was formally illegal. They seldom were prosecuted, however, for normally they fell below the disciplining gaze of the authorities, and their earnings were usually too small to warrant the attention of government. Thus, they have left little in the way of direct documentation in the criminal records. When they occasionally do appear, it is usually in the context of testimony about other crimes and the petty violence of lower-class life. Suggestively, in this context they are often described by neighbors as "good" and even "honorable" women, which seems to indicate that those who were perceived as practicing occasionally out of necessity to aid their families or merely survive were relatively accepted if they lived quiet and stable lives and did not disrupt the neighborhood.

A group of more regular prostitutes who were registered with the authorities and paid taxes worked from the public bordello known as the Castelletto, located in a warren of small narrow *calli* not far from the Rialto bridge. At the time, the area was seen as a relatively self-contained island which also was populated with baths (*stue*) and little rooms with beds opening on to the street known as *carampane*.³⁵ One entrance to

³⁴ Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1897–1903), vol. 8, col. 414. The literature on prostitution is immense. The major legislation was published already in the 19th century: Giovanni Battista de Lorenzi, ed., *Leggi e memorie venete sulla prostituzione* (Venice, 1870–72). An overview of the subject with an emphasis on courtesans was provided by the already-cited volume *Il gioco di amore*, with essays by the literary scholar Giorgio Padoan, the social historian Giovanni Scarabello, and Nelli Elena Vanzan Marchini. For Florence, Richard Trexler's archival based study still remains a solid work, "La prostitution Florentine au XV^e siècle: Patronages et clienteles," in *Annales ESC* 36 (1981), pp. 983–1015. See also n. 3 above.

³⁵ This was a dialect term apparently related to the name of the Rampani family which had once owned a palace in the area the Ca' Rampani. The name then became associated

this area was over the famous Ponte delle Tette where, according to law, in the 16th century prostitutes were supposed to expose their breasts to encourage young men to express their sexual desires with women rather than men. The location of this district in a way is a perfect metaphor for Renaissance attitudes towards prostitution in Venice; for it was at once at the heart of the city, just off the most important commercial districts of the city thriving with the economic life that made Venice great, yet at the same time it was isolated and relatively invisible if one did not seek it out. Thus it provided readily available and relatively inexpensive illicit sex with decorum.³⁶

This was a goal that in Venice appears to have become more widely shared across the Renaissance; even as practice and Venice's reputation as a city where prostitution was widely available clearly seemed to contradict this goal. Exemplary of this is legislation passed in 1502 where the authorities once again tried to force prostitution off the more public streets of the city and back into the area around the Castelletto. It ordered that within four days all prostitutes must return to practice their trade in that area or face a penalty of six months in jail, 25 lashes, and a fine of 100 lire. In addition, this was to be announced by a communal herald in the areas where prostitution was being most intensively practiced outside this area. That list of places is instructive: "In San Luca in the street of the house of the Corner family, in San Luca at the bridge of the Fuseri, in San Anzelo in front of the house of the Malipiero family, in San Samuele . . . in San Moisè . . . in San Salvador, before the houses of the Nani family, in San Lio, in Santa Maria Formosa on the Ruga Giuffa, in Santa Maria Formosa on the Calle longa, in San Antonio at the arch, in San Giovanni Bragola [today Bandiera e Moro], in Santa Trinità [today Ternita], in Santa Maria Mater Domini . . . in San Stin . . . in San Silvestro . . . In San Aponal in the square, in San Polo in the street of the Cavalli, in San Pantalon . . . in San Leonardo . . . at the Biri in the street of the house of the Zusto family, in

with the prostitution practiced in the area and became a term in Venetian dialect also denoting an old run-down prostitute; see Giuseppe Boerio, *Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano* (Venice, 1856), p. 136, col. 3.

³⁶ For a discussion of a number of civic initiatives to foster a similar more decorous and moral vision of the city by theoretically "saving" women from prostitution see, Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, pp. 52–54. See also the imaginative study of Elizabeth Pavan, "Police des mœurs, société et politique à Venise à la fin du Moyen Age," in *Revue Historique* 246 (1980), 244–66.

San Basso . . . in Santa Margarita . . . at San Sebastiano . . . in San Barnabà in the Calle Longa, and in San Stae in the Calle del Forno.”³⁷

In all, 31 locations are mentioned, suggesting strongly that the ideal of limiting prostitution to one area of the city out of public view was no longer working, if it ever had. Moreover, if continuing legislation passed regularly over the 16th century that aimed at securing the same end is any indication, it remained a dead letter.³⁸ Another indication of the failure of such attempts is the decline of the public brothel itself. Across our period it was rented out to a series of noble Venetian families who ran it and paid taxes on their profits, most notably the colorful Malipiero clan. Their revenues had sunk so low by the early 1500s that Dionisio Malipiero tried to sell his family's rights to it but could not find a buyer. And in 1537 his son Priam lamented to authorities that in the best of times he only had ten to 15 prostitutes working for him there and more usually only three or four.³⁹ His complaints need to be taken with a grain of salt, however, as they were part of a petition to reduce the taxes on his family's monopoly rights; but again they suggest that the public brothel was no longer the place where prostitution was centered in the city.

Their bordello's decline was probably predicated on competition from other forms of prostitution. Unregistered and untaxed part-time workers were probably less expensive and thus undercut business. There are occasional references also to private brothels and casinos where prostitutes worked, although it is not clear what went on at the latter.⁴⁰ Registered prostitutes who worked independently or for pimps (*ruffiani* or *ruffiane*) were probably more costly, but also more competitive for clients. In a little known 16th-century Venetian comedy, *La Bulesca*, Marcolina a young prostitute who has left a privately run bordello to practice independently explained to her sister the benefits of practicing independently, “If I had remained [in the bordello] . . . I would never have had more than a little money . . . It is good to be one's own master, to live in one's own house rather than to have to screw this one and that in the bordello. If you earn a dress, it is yours, while there [in the bordello] you must pay a third of your earnings for expenses and constantly sweat under this one and

³⁷ A.S.V., Signori di Notte al Civil, Capitolare I, fol. 113r; published in Lorenzi, *Leggi e memorie*, p. 92; see also discussion in Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, p. 49.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, p. 236 n. 51.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 43–44, 235 n. 40.

that."⁴¹ Later in the comedy, Marcolina's sister points out another plus of her abandoning the brothel, noting that she has become "a refined whore" and now can choose those she wants to take as "lovers," rather than being at the mercy of the madam who ran the brothel.⁴²

Beyond Marcolina's increased earnings, three things are noteworthy here: the claim that she had become a more refined prostitute; that she was now more selective in whom she accepted; and that she accepted these men as "lovers." As noted earlier, there had developed in Venice a social hierarchy of prostitution that in many ways mirrored the increasingly stratified hierarchy of the city. Refinement, exclusivity, and love all contributed to defining that hierarchy. As one moved up from part-time workers and women working from bordellos, the nature of the exchange changed. Once again we are beyond the looking glass of Venice's wonderland, and prostitution reveals itself to be increasingly unfamiliar from a modern perspective: at higher levels, customers tended to become lovers, and the relationship sought was more than sexual, involving ideally refined manners along with other attributes of a more elite way of life.⁴³ Closely tied to this was exclusivity, which meant that a prostitute chose her clients and accepted only the best. At the top of this hierarchy, and perhaps in a position to which Marcolina aspired, lay the apogee of Venetian prostitution—the "honest" courtesan. As Bandello's portrayal of the unnamed Venetian courtesan that opened this essay makes clear, she was anything but a reliable or "common" Lombard prostitute who could be simply bought. Definitely not common to all men, she decided which men were notable and refined enough to enjoy her favors and accepted them as "lovers." Those lovers, of course, had to pay for her love, but she was an "honest" courtesan because money was not enough and sex was not all she offered. It may be that, in fact, the ideal of an educated refined woman who accepted only the best men as her lovers and offered in turn educated conversation, wit, and an elite mannered, refined relationship was more a fantasy than a reality, as cynical observers like Pietro Aretino

⁴¹ *La Bulesca*, ed. Bianca Maria da Rif, in *La letteratura "alla Bulesca": Testi rinacenti veneti* (Padua, 1984), pp. 48–84; for Marcolina's speech, see pp. 58–59.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.

⁴³ For this see Guido Ruggiero, "Who's Afraid of Giulia Napolitana? Pleasure, Fear, and Imagining the Arts of the Renaissance Courtesan," in Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon, *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-cultural Perspectives* (New York, 2006), pp. 280–94; and Guido Ruggiero, "Prostitution: Looking for Love," in Bette Talvacchia, ed., *A Cultural History of Sexuality in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2011), which focuses on the issue of love and prostitution in the Renaissance more generally.

observed in his famed discussion of the practices of prostitutes in his *Dialogues*. But even as a fantasy, this vision was significant.⁴⁴ For in many ways, sex and especially its illicit world in the Renaissance were driven by imagination and fantasy; and thus both must be taken seriously if we wish to understand their meaning and practice.

The noted meeting between the future king of France, Henry III, and the famous courtesan/poet Veronica Franco is perhaps the most notable example of the elite and refined reputation that the topmost ranks of prostitutes could command. When Henry visited the city in 1574, he cut a portion of the elaborate public ceremonies the city had devised to celebrate his visit and win his favor to enjoy her reportedly more interesting and refined favors.⁴⁵ Again we are in a Venetian wonderland with what might seem a private, even secret, moment between the future king of France and the current queen of courtesans being celebrated publicly afterwards by both Henry and Veronica. At a just slightly more prosaic level, the marriage of the courtesan Andriana Savorgnan with the Venetian noble Marco Dandolo reveals how refinement, selectivity, and love all figured centrally in her practice. Court testimony that grew out of the claim by the Dandolo family that Andriana had used love magic to bind Marco's love to her and ultimately force him to marry her against his will—a claim that he vehemently denied, affirming that his love was real—emphasized that he was just the last in a long line of her noble lovers, several of whom had also attempted to marry her. Significantly, this testimony came from a number of those nobles themselves and demonstrates that before her marriage she had been the darling of a select group of some of the most important men in Venice.⁴⁶

The Dandolo family's claim that Andriana had used love magic to bind Marco's love was, in the context of the time, a good one, as love magic was often associated with a courtesan's arts and prostitution well down the social scale, again suggesting how important a role love was seen to play in prostitution. In fact, it appears that in Venice, prostitutes—along with

⁴⁴ See my discussion of this in *Binding Passions*, pp. 41–43.

⁴⁵ Margaret Rosenthal describes this encounter briefly in her important study of Franco, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth Century Venice* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 102–11, along with giving an excellent account of the cultural world and life of the most famed of Venetian courtesans. On this more generally, see the essays in Feldman and Gordon, *The Courtesan's Arts*, and the forthcoming volume by Courtney Quaintance tentatively titled *Gentleman's Club: Masculinity and Collective Identity in Sixteenth Century Venice*.

⁴⁶ Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, pp. 28–29.

cunning women, midwives, and healers—were assumed to have knowledge of such magic, and the records of the courts dealing with these matters indicate that they were regularly prosecuted for such practices. Love magic often focused on sex, either by forcing victims to practice it or by blocking their ability to do so, and so was an important part of the arsenal of prostitutes and a less well known but significant aspect of the illicit worlds of sex in the city. But at the same time it was also a tool frequently called upon to find mates, encourage sex in marriage, and at times even to win back from prostitutes or concubines the sexual attentions of spouses. Thus such magic inhabits a richly revealing gray area that shares aspects of the illicit and licit like many other formally illicit activities. To briefly summarize a very complex practice, such magic suggests that love was a strong and dangerous passion rather different from the generally tamer emotion celebrated today—again it is a term that takes us beyond the looking glass and into a strangely familiar but slightly off-kilter world—and it was an emotion closely aligned for many with powerful sexual passions.⁴⁷

Much of this magic was designed to make someone fall so completely in love with another that they could not eat, drink, sleep, or find repose until they acted on that passion, and the action that was assumed to fulfill that need was sexual intercourse. Prostitutes used such magic to attract and hold clients, wives used it to regain the affections of their husbands, and match-makers used it to make difficult matches. Significantly, the latter two uses suggest that there was some ideal of sexual passion and attraction in marriage, especially at levels below the social elite. It also implies, as the case of Andriana seemed to prove to the Dandolo clan, that such magic could be used to short-circuit more important family calculations for marriage at upper class levels. Of course, magic could also be used to block marriages or disrupt them, both at the level of blocking males from being able to function sexually and thus consummate them and at the level of sowing hate and discord between couples.

Perhaps even more interesting and certainly more complex is what such magic suggests about the passions and parts of the body associated with sex. More systematic study needs to be done, but it seems clear that for much of this magic sex, passion, and pleasure were closely associated and that the passions involved were deemed to be strong and potentially

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 66–129 for this and the discussion that follows.

violent. People could be and were literally destroyed by love and sexual desire. Suggestively, love magic was also strongly phallic in its symbolism and much less focused on women's bodies than might be expected, especially as, in most cases, the magic itself in Venice appears to have been done by women following largely oral traditions passed down via women's networks. When occasionally female body parts or fluids played a role, it was often more associated with reproduction than with parts of the body that might be seen as erotic. In fact, female breasts, legs, and bottoms play virtually no sexual role in this magic. It seems almost as if its practitioners had internalized the vision that a woman's role in sex was at its deepest level for reproduction, even when the immediate goal of such magic was love, sex, and pleasure. Finally, once again this magic, although usually involving women in an active role seeking to secure their sexual desires, still emphasized the passive/feminine active/masculine vision of sex that dominated more widely the understanding of sexual relations between men and women. In sum, love magic in many ways reinforced the traditional male dominant, phallic-oriented vision of sex, even as paradoxically it was practiced by women often seeking to break free from that vision.

Returning to prostitution, while clearly a wide range of men sought the services of prostitutes in Renaissance Venice, including a sizable foreign community of sailors and merchants, as well as a growing number of visitors seeking out its illicit world, local males of all social classes were probably their most important clients. But during the Renaissance it appears that a more negative vision was growing up about certain relationships with prostitutes. First, of course, upper-class men theoretically were to avoid lower-class and common prostitutes, for they were just that, lower class and common. A hardening of social stratification made such down-class sexual contact less acceptable. Certainly such an ideal was regularly ignored, but nonetheless it grew stronger with time and fit into reforming ideals aimed at creating a more moral society and preaching campaigns that pressed similar goals. At the same time and growing in part out of similar initiatives that stressed that adult men should be able to control their passions and in doing so focus on family and social responsibilities rather than pursuing their passions with prostitutes, we find in Venice a growing vision that men, when they reached their late twenties and early thirties, should abandon the world of illicit sex. Of course, once again there is a plethora of information that demonstrates this was more an ideal than a reality, but nonetheless it was an ideal that would slowly transform prostitution from a positive if sinful aspect of life practiced

and often celebrated at the very heart of Venice to something to be hidden away and eliminated from the morally pure virgin that for many the *Serenissima* should be.

Still, this ideal that males should desert prostitution and the world of illicit sex when they married and became fully adult returns our discussion to that long period of *gioventù* that distinguishes the development of Renaissance males from that of modern males. For across the Renaissance, ideally the world of illicit sex was the special provenance of male youths. From this perspective, prostitutes provided a crucial service. Most significantly perhaps when young men were making that transition in their late teens from being passive sexually to being active, prostitutes were available to aid in the transition. As professionals, they could safely teach young males their new active roles and could do so without creating the kind of problems that pregnant servants or the lost virginity of young women of marriageable age might create. Moreover, given the careful protection of young women and the powerful honor issues involved in sex with married women, readily available prostitution was also seen as limiting more troubling crimes such as adultery and rape. Of course, all of this was once again an ideal, with fornication, rape, and adultery being regularly reported in the Venetian criminal documents and young men having the troubling distinction of being the most responsible for such crimes.⁴⁸ Thus, in the Venetian Renaissance vision of things, prostitution had an important and largely positive role to play in the development of youth into men and in maintaining the sexual order and honor of society. Once again we find here the illicit world intertwining with, and in a way even serving, the licit order of society.

It may be that for younger males in the more passive years of their early to mid-teens prostitution also was seen as providing a preferred venue for sexual activities. With such youths, prostitutes could take a more active role, perhaps like that which Angela took with young Giulio. Unfortunately, there is little record of such relationships beyond hints in literature and the ongoing series of laws that attempt to protect young males from being duped by prostitutes and taken advantage of economically. Yet the feminine passivity of such youths opens up another significant aspect of the world of illicit sex that may have contributed to a positive attitude towards younger males frequenting prostitutes—the fear that the sexual

⁴⁸ For this see the extensive discussion of these crimes in, Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*.

interests of youths might otherwise be turned to the officially more heinous sin of sodomy. What is clear, however, is that male/male sex was seen in Venice almost invariably in terms of a relationship between an older sexually active youth and a younger passive one. Mirroring the age distinctions discussed earlier, the younger males involved were usually assumed to be feminine and in their early to mid-teens, the older males more masculine and aggressive in their late teens and twenties. Once again theoretically, males once they married left such relationships behind to focus on family and reproduction. Criminal records suggest strongly that when male sodomy in Venice fit this pattern and did not involve what was perceived as threatening political dimensions—groups that involved young upper class youths and older men were especially feared—it was seldom prosecuted. Rather, prosecution focused on exceptional cases involving older men or dangerous groups, a pattern that was broken occasionally, however, when it appears there was a momentary panic about the growing popularity of such activities.⁴⁹

There are indications that such sodomy particularly oriented towards a youth culture was a significant part of the illicit world of sex in Venice across the Renaissance. In fact, legislation designed to limit the crime and sin restricted ball games and other forms of gaming by youths in certain areas of the city, schools of abacus and fencing, gymnastics in certain establishments, and even gatherings of youths in particular pastry and candy shops, among other activities.⁵⁰ The famous comedy *The Master of the Horse* (*Il Marescalco*), by Pietro Aretino, provides an interesting portrayal of the age stereotypes associated with sodomy at the time, even as to a degree it challenges them. Although set in Modena, it was largely written in Venice and filled with references to the city, providing a relatively sympathetic description of the travails of the lead character known simply as the Marescalco, a young man who has reached the age when it is assumed he should marry and leave behind the illicit pleasures of a male/male loving relationship—his “*gioventudini*” as one character describes

⁴⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 109–45, and the important article by Nicholas S. Davidson, “Sodomy in Early Modern Venice,” in Tom Betteridge, ed., *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester, 2002), pp. 65–81. For a study that presents a similar vision of age distinctions to that of *Boundaries of Eros* for Florence, see Michael J. Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality in Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1996). See also for Venice, Patricia Labalme, “Sodomy and Venetian Justice in the Renaissance,” *The Legal History Review*, 52 (1984), 217–54; as well as Giovanni Dall’Orto, “‘Socratic Love’ As a Disguise for Same-Sex Love in the Italian Renaissance,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 16 (1988), 33–65.

⁵⁰ Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 138–40.

them—to accept the adult responsibilities of marriage. He rejects, however, this ideal obligation and sets off a complex plot which eventually sees him happily married at the end of the play (as comedies require), but nicely, given Aretino's irreverent wit, to a young, feminine male page clearly in his early teens, rather than a woman. Suggestively, although a few characters in the play refer to his evil ways and the price that he should pay for his sins, everyone, including those who initially criticized his commitment to sodomy, applauds and accepts his happy male/male wedding at the end and the implicit conclusion that his sodomy will continue without embracing the ideal of adult male sexuality.⁵¹

That happy ending, however, suggests a somewhat less happy outcome for Renaissance marriage and the discussion of marriage which opened this essay. The illicit world of sex, although it included a wider range of related activities beyond prostitution and sodomy in Venice,⁵² for all its perceived service in containing (even in a way disciplining) youthful and dangerous sexual desires and passions, also clearly created problems for the placement of sex within marriage. For when upper-class husbands in their late twenties or early thirties married very young women in their early teens, virgins and sexually inexperienced, their often extensive experiences in the illicit worlds of the city created a very unequal sexual relationship. That experiential gap could be and was seen at times as serving the ideal of sustaining an unequal relationship between passive wife and active husband sexually. From that perspective, his experience and her lack thereof placed him firmly in command of the situation. Nonetheless, it was an ideal and a reality that had the potential to create significant problems for both partners, problems often revealed in both literature and archival documents. First, of course, many men may have found marital sex with inexperienced and very young brides not satisfying as sex—

⁵¹ For a discussion of this comedy and its Venetian dimensions, see Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love*, pp. 19–40, and for the use of the term *gioventudini* to refer to sodomy, p. 30; for a compelling reading of the comedy from a different perspective, see also Deanna Shemek, “Aretino's Marescalco: Marriage Woes and the Duke of Mantua,” *Renaissance Studies* 16 (2002), 366–80.

⁵² Perhaps most notable in this area are concubinage, which with its marriage-like attributes for some fell in a gray area where the licit and the illicit overlapped, along with a series of sexual activities with clerics which there is not space to discuss in this essay. The latter is discussed in detail in Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros*, pp. 70–88; the former has recently been studied for Venice by Jana Byars, “Concubines and Concubinage in Early Modern Venice” (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2006), which is scheduled to be published in a revised form as a book by Toronto University Press, and by Ferraro, *Marriage Wars*, pp. 105–18.

hardly sex at all—and thus returned to prostitutes, concubines, sodomy, or more violent pursuits, largely abandoning their wives to child rearing and domesticity. The recent studies of Joanne Ferraro and others suggest that this was a common problem in Venice.⁵³ For wives, in turn, the marital bed and the supposed sexual normality of marital life may in many instances have had little to do with love, pleasure, or the erotic for that matter, and in the end had more to do with duty and service than sex, as was the ideal. Once again criminal documents in Venice, especially those concerned with adultery, reinforce literary accounts such as that of young Valiera suggesting that marriage was not the most likely place to look for sex or sexual satisfaction for many women at the time.

Valiera the young wife in the end had her sexual pleasures with the young Giulio while the “old man” who was her husband remained invisible. And her neighbor, the young widow Angela, after several false starts, also finally enjoyed the youth, as well as her servant Nena, imagining that she was in a brothel enjoying the dirty words that men spoke there. Giulio, in turn, found his fantasy world of mannered and upper-class sexual pleasure in the fantasy world of his comedy, even as his unnamed Lombard comrade found his demise in similar fantasies. Yet in a way, when one seeks the reality behind their fantasies, one finds that even from a modern perspective Venice and its sexual worlds appear to be seen through the looking glass of Lewis Carroll’s Alice, with virtually everything relating to sex—marriage, love, family, prostitution, sodomy, the illicit, and the licit—slightly out of kilter and shifted to reflect back to us a suggestively different world where the ideal and practice of sex were significantly different and wonder inducing for wayfarers whether they were Renaissance denizens of literature or modern scholars.

⁵³ See on this Ferraro, *Marriage Wars*, which also, however, documents cases of affection and even love in marriage. My point is not that neither existed in marriage but merely that at upper class levels, for the reasons discussed, affection was at best hoped for and passionate love generally seen as unlikely.

THE VENETIAN INTELLECTUAL WORLD

Margaret L. King

Michel de Montaigne introduced a new genre of European literary composition when he announced, in 1580, "I am myself the matter of my book."¹ Likewise, Venice positioned itself within the complex cultural fabric of late medieval Italy by announcing—implicitly, through the books to which it gave birth—that it would itself be the subject of its intellectual endeavor. Venice, the city, the state, the empire, and the republic fostered thinkers who thought primarily about Venice, creating an intellectual product of remarkable solidarity and uniformity from the 13th through the 15th century, even as it adapted to new currents such as Hellenism, humanism, and print technology, whose impassive surface contrasted markedly with that of Florence and such other Italian centers as Milan, Naples, and Rome.

That massive wall of consensual Venetian opinion fractured and fell at the turn of the 16th century. For about 100 years thereafter, Venice fostered a uniquely vibrant and diverse intellectual culture, in which individuals, now unleashed, sought free expression; members of social groups not formerly active in intellectual life took center stage; and novel matters and heterodox views fed the city's churning presses.

By the early decades of the 17th century, that moment of intellectual insurgency passed. Dynamism remained in theater and opera, in music and the arts and the performances of Carnival, but the intellectual culture of Venice returned to its roots. The city thought and wrote, once again, primarily about itself and its greatness—a greatness that was now not unfolding into the future but situated in the past.

Foundations of Renaissance Intellectual Culture

In 1351, the itinerant humanist Petrarch came to Venice in the service of Milan and bonded with the doge Andrea Dandolo (1306–54)—political

¹ Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, ed. and trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, 1957), "To the Reader (1580)," p. 2. See also "Of Experience," vol. 3, No. 13, p. 82: "I study myself more than any other subject."

prodigy, warrior, jurist, thinker.² This event uniquely marks the beginning of the Renaissance in Venice. Even as, in the last decades of the Trecento and the beginning of Quattrocento, Venice clinched its supremacy on the seas and embarked on its domination over the cities of the *terraferma*, it would embrace the cultural world of the Italian and European West from which it had long remained detached. The marriage of Venetian traditions to Italian humanism embodied in the encounter between Dandolo and Petrarch would generate that future.

By the time Petrarch arrived in Venice on his 1351 mission, Dandolo had already completed one history of Venice, the *Chronica brevis*, and begun another, his *Chronica per extensum descripta*.³ These were unique in their clarity, which derived from the professional Latin prose and juridical training of the author. In other regards, however, they belonged to the Venetian chronachistic tradition⁴ which reached back to the 11th-century

² For Petrarch in Venice, see especially Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Il Petrarca, 1 'Umanesimo e la scolastica a Venezia," in Vittore Branca, ed., *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 3 vols (Florence, 1979), 2:79–92; Giorgio Padoan, ed., *Petrarca, Venezia e Il Veneto* (Florence, 1976); and, for further exploration of his relationship to the chancery circle, Girolamo Arnaldi, "La cancelleria ducale fra culto della 'legalitas' e nuova cultura umanistica," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 3 (1997): *La formazione dello stato patrizio*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi, Giorgio Cracco, and Alberto Tenenti, pp. 865–87; and Nicholas Mann, "Petrarca e la cancelleria veneziana," in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–85), vol. 2 (1976): *Il Trecento*, pp. 517–35. For Petrarch generally, see Thomas Goddard Bergin, *Petrarch* (New York, 1970); Morris Bishop, *Petrarch and His World* (Bloomington, 1963); Kenelm Foster, *Petrarch: Poet and Humanist* (Edinburgh, 1984); Nicholas Mann, *Petrarch* (Oxford, 1984); Charles E. Trinkaus, *The Poet as Philosopher: Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Consciousness* (New Haven, 1979); and Ernest H. Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago, 1961). For Dandolo as a cultural and political symbol, see Debra Pincus, "Hard Times and Ducal Radiance: Andrea Dandolo and the Construction of the Ruler in Fourteenth-Century Venice," in John J. Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 89–136. For the 14th-century Venetian cultural setting, see Vittore Branca and Giorgio Padoan, eds., *Boccaccio, Venezia, e il Veneto* (Florence, 1979), especially Agostino Pertusi, "Venezia, la cultura greca e il Boccaccio," pp. 63–80; also Angelo Monteverdi, "Lingua e letteratura a Venezia nel secolo di Marco Polo," in Branca, ed., *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 1:355–62; and Alfredo Stussi, "La lingua," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 3: *La formazione dello stato patrizio*, ed. Arnaldi, Cracco, and Tenenti, pp. 911–32.

³ Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica per extensum descripta*, 46–1280 dopo Christo, ed. Ester Pastorello, in L. A. Muratori, ed., *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*; vol. 12, part. 1, rev. and expanded, ed. Giosué Carducci, 7 vols (Bologna, 1938–58), for which see Arnaldi, "Andrea Dandolo doge-cronista," in Agostino Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi: aspetti e problem* (Florence, 1970), pp. 127–268.

⁴ For the origins of Venetian historiography, see the essays in Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi*; a useful roundup in Christiane Neerfeld, *Historia per forma di diaria: la cronachistica veneziana contemporanea a cavallo tra il Quattro e il Cinquecento*

work of Paulus Diaconus but had been largely established by 13th-century chroniclers, notably Martin da Canale,⁵ writing in the crucial moment between the conquest of Constantinople and the *serrata* of the *Maggior Consiglio*. The principal output of Venetian intellectual culture prior to the Renaissance, these chronicles narrated the myth of Venice long before that myth became a factor in Italian political struggles.⁶ They celebrated Venetian origins, Venetian piety, Venetian triumphs, and Venetian destiny, in a rhetoric devoid of anecdote or personal detail but packed with quotations from the documents that were written, managed, and filed by the notaries and secretaries who composed the accounts. From that notarial milieu Dandolo, too, emerged, and towered above it.

A Latinist well read in classical sources, Dandolo admired Petrarch's humanist culture. After their brief meeting, the two carried on their friendship in letters rich in citations of ancient authorities but addressing a present problem: that of war and peace, with Petrarch advocating the latter and Dandolo, at that moment engaged in the epochal struggle with the Genoese, defending the necessity of the former. In 1354, Dandolo died. His secretaries carried on his work: the Grand Chancellor Raffaino Caresini continuing Dandolo's chronicle (for the period 1343–88) and his predecessor, the Grand Chancellor Benintendi Ravagnani (d. 1365), sustaining the relationship between Petrarch and the curial circle. Ravagnani's contacts with the humanist led the Senate to invite Petrarch to come to Venice and bring with him his famous library, then the largest and richest in Europe. The Senate would provide him with a residence; and on his death, Venice would inherit his books.

(Venice, 2006), pp. 15–25; and for the 14th century chroniclers, see Girolamo Arnaldi and Lidia Capo, "I cronisti di Venezia e della Marca Trevigiana," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 2 (1976): *Il Trecento*, pp. 272–337.

⁵ Martin da Canal, *Les estoires de Venise. Cronaca Veneziana in Lingua Francese Dalle Origini Al 1275*, ed. Alberto Limentani (Florence, 1972). See also Antonio Carile, "Aspetti della cronachistica veneziana nei secoli XIII e XIV," in Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi*, pp. 75–126; Giorgio Cracco, "Il pensiero storico di fronte ai problemi del comune veneziano," in Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi*, pp. 45–74; Gina Fasoli, "I fondamenti della storiografia veneziana," in Pertusi, ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi*, pp. 11–44; and Agostino Pertusi, "Maistre Martino da Canal interprete cortese delle Crociate e dell'ambiente veneziano del secolo XIII," in Branca, ed., *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 1:279–95.

⁶ Much has been written on the "myth of Venice." See especially James Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography," *The Journal of Modern History* 58.1 (1986), 43–94; John J. Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), introduction ("Reconsidering Venice"), pp. 1–35; and Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 13–61.

So Petrarch came to Venice again, more than a decade after his encounter with Dandolo. His presence was a plum for the city; and learned patriots, citizens, and foreigners were Petrarch's frequent visitors, acquiring from their conversations with the great man something of the luster of his presence. Four such men crossed his threshold in 1366: four young Aristotelians, two of them Venetian nobles who had studied at the University of Padua, who pronounced a dread sentence upon him: he was a good man, they said, but not learned—for, of course, he utterly disdained the intricacies of scholastic logic. In consequence, the bargain unraveled, Petrarch left town in a huff, and his books, transferred to the protection of the Carrara lord of Padua, were dispersed. Petrarch himself tells this tale and responds to the accusations in his *On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others* (1370),⁷ a skillful attack on the arrogance of the scholastic posture as well as a tactful and humorous, yet determined, defense of his own position. It was written as he journeyed down the Po to fall into the waiting arms of Francesco da Carrara, who provided Petrarch a mountain-top villa at Arquà to replace the one on Venice's Riva degli Schiavoni.

Petrarch's four antagonists were learned indeed, but in the books of Aristotle, then the rage at the University of Padua where so many Venetians studied. Although Aristotelian physics and metaphysics had been established by the 13th century in the universities of northern Europe—Paris, Oxford, Cambridge—they came to Italy only in the 14th. As Paul Oskar Kristeller has established, the university-based study of Aristotle was therefore just as new a pursuit in Italy as the humanist study of classical texts, which began outside of university precincts.⁸ These two intellectual approaches wrestled with each other in the arcades and studies of the Italian Renaissance. And they collided decisively in Petrarch's Venetian aerie when the four Aristotelians whom he had considered friends proclaimed his ignorance to the listening world.

The incident described in *On His Own Ignorance* has long attracted the interest of those seeking to learn the fate of Petrarch's books and the origins of Venice's eventually magnificent Marciana library. But it is of interest, as well, for the glimpse it gives of an emerging intellectual circle

⁷ Francis Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca), *On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others*, ed. and trans. Hans Nachod; in Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, eds., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man: Selections in Translation* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 47–133.

⁸ Kristeller, "Il Petrarca, l'Umanesimo e la scolastica a Venezia"; Kristeller, Paul Oskar, "Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance," in Michael Mooney, ed., *Renaissance Thought and its Sources* (New York, 1979), pp. 85–105.

in Trecento Venice. Doge Andrea Dandolo, it has been noted, was, like Petrarch's four hypercritical friends, a graduate of the University of Padua, where they had studied natural philosophy but he had studied law. In both cases, Venice is seen to export its young men westward to Padua, where they came in contact with intellectual currents of *terraferma* Italy one or two generations before Venice launched its project of territorial domination. The Venetian contingent at Padua would be largely made up of young nobles who were of the same rank and often the same clan as those who held sway in the Senate. Of the same ilk were the nobles who, from the last years of the Trecento, were educated in the humanist curriculum and, so trained, seized direction of the humanist movement in Venice even as they assumed important political or ecclesiastical roles. Andrea Dandolo, the doge-historian who corresponded with Petrarch, had forged this path. Generations of patrician intellectuals would follow his lead over the next few centuries.

The Arrival of Humanism

As Ronald Witt has shown, the humanist movement began in Italy as early as the 13th century with the increased intensity of classical studies among the secretaries and bureaucrats of urban courts and councils.⁹ In that early resurgence of classical awareness, Venice played but a small role—far smaller, strikingly, than nearby Padua. Humanism came to Venice late in the 14th century when a new generation of patrician youth embraced the study of ancient books for their own delight, and for the benefit of the state.¹⁰ From the outset, humanism in Venice was

⁹ Ronald G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000).

¹⁰ For humanism in Venice, see Margaret L. King, "A Study in Venetian Humanism at Mid-Quattrocento: Filippo Da Rimini and His *Symposium De Paupertate*, Analysis and Text," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 2 (1978), 75–96; n.s. 3 (1979), 141–86; n.s. 4 (1980), 27–44; King, *The Death of the Child Valerio Marcello* (Chicago, 1994); and the many contributions of Vittore Branca, especially: "Ermolao Barbaro and Late Quattrocento Venetian Humanism," in John R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 218–43; "L'Umanesimo veneziano alla fine del Quattrocento: Ermolao Barbaro e il suo circolo," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980), *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, pp. 123–75; Vittore Branca, "L'Umanesimo," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 23–755; also the essays by various authors collected in Vittore Branca, ed., *Umanesimo europeo e umanesimo veneziano* (Florence, 1964); and the essays by Branca collected in his volume *La sapienza civile: studi sull'Umanesimo a Venezia* (Florence, 1998). In addition see Hans Baron, *Humanistic and Political Literature in Florence*

married to the mission of its patriciate to advance the city's interests in every way possible: by diplomacy, by legislation, by military means, and by the communication of their values in the highly esteemed language and themes of humanism.

A first generation of Venetian humanists (born between 1370 and 1399) introduced an ideal of classical learning and adapted humanist genres for Venetian purposes. In the vanguard was Zaccaria Trevisan, who had observed firsthand during his magistracy in Crete a contemporary Greek-speaking culture and had grown conscious of the value of the Greek classics for present-day Venetian leaders. Not only did Trevisan himself lead the way but he also actively encouraged younger patricians to follow his example. Conspicuous among these was Francesco Barbaro, a youth at the time of his first intellectual encounters with Trevisan documented in his famous book *De re uxoria* [*On Marriage*, 1415]. But Barbaro would mature to become a statesman of first rank, a military hero, and eventually a Procurator of San Marco, the highest official magistracy short of the dogeship.¹¹ In the course of this busy political career, Barbaro composed works in the humanist genres of oration, letter, and treatise, as well as translations from the Greek, imprinting the intellectual culture of Venice

and Venice at the Beginning of the Quattrocento: Studies in Criticism and Chronology (New York, 1968); Virginia Cox, "Rhetoric and Humanism in Quattrocento Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 56.3 (2003), 652–94; Felix Gilbert, "Humanism in Venice," in Sergio Bertelli, Nicolai Rubinstein, and Craig Hugh Smyth, eds., *Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations: Acts of Two Conferences at Villa I Tatti in 1976–1977* (Florence, 1979), pp. 13–26, repr. in Robert Black, ed., *Renaissance Thought: A Reader* (London, 2001), pp. 265–74; Bruno Nardi, *Saggi sulla cultura veneta del Quattro e Cinquecento* (Padua, 1971); Luciano Gargan, "Il preumanesimo a Vicenza, Treviso, Venezia," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 2 (1976): *Il Trecento*, pp. 142–70; and Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven, 1996). For the generational analysis of Venetian humanism offered here, see the list of the 92 humanists identified, organized by social class, occupation, and generation, in King, *Venetian Humanism*, Table 7, pp. 298–99.

¹¹ King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 323–25 and *passim*; also Margaret King, "Caldiera and the Barbaros on Marriage and the Family: Humanist Reflections of Venetian Realities," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1976), pp. 19–50, repr. in King, *Humanism, Venice, and Women: Essays on the Italian Renaissance*, facsimile repr. no. 5 (Aldershot/Burlington Vt., 2005). Francesco Barbaro, *Epistolario*, ed. Claudio Griggio, 2 vols (Florence, 1991, 1999), online at <http://digital.casalini.it/8822247892>, is a critical edition of the letters; Francesco Barbaro *Francisci Barbari de re uxoria liber, in partes duas*, ed. Attilio Gnesotto, nuova ed. (Padua, 1915), is a critical edition of that important work, for which a partial translation exists in Francesco Barbaro, "On Wifely Duties," in Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt, eds., *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society* (Philadelphia, 1978), pp. 189–228. See also, for the Barbaro clan, which produced a series of patrician intellectuals, Michela Marangoni and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Una famiglia veneziana nella storia: i Barbaro: atti del convegno di studi in occasione del quinto centenario della morte dell'umanista Ermolao, Venezia, 4–6 novembre 1993* (Venice, 1996).

as much as he did its politics. Also belonging to the first generation of Venetian humanists was Leonardo Giustiniani, brother of Lorenzo, the first Venetian patriarch, and father of Bernardo.¹² Giustiniani was not only a humanist whose knowledge of Greek enabled him to translate from Plutarch, among others, but a highly popular poet of both secular and religious works.

The second generation of humanists (born between 1400 and 1429), the most numerous cohort and the one in which lay patricians were especially preponderant, cemented its fortunes to the political mission of the ruling class. Although these authors worked in many genres, political themes were paramount. Bernardo Giustiniani, for instance, in addition to numerous orations and letters, wrote two enormous works affirming Venice and its traditions (a history of the city and a hagiography of patron saint Mark the Evangelist).¹³ Domenico Morosini and Paolo Morosini, of the same lineage but not the same immediate family, wrote works on Venetian governance and in defense of Venetian foreign policy respectively,¹⁴ while Lauro Qurini wrote defenses respectively of the Venetian nobility and state,¹⁵ and the prolific Ludovico Foscarini wrote orations and letters tracking his tireless efforts to pursue Venetian diplomatic interests.¹⁶

In the third generation of Venetian humanists (born between 1430 and 1459), political issues remained predominant, although here, in an unfamiliar key, Ermolao Barbaro the Younger, Francesco's grandson, dedicated himself primarily to philosophical and literary interests. Author of *De officio legati* [*On the Office of Ambassador*], fully in alignment with the political interests of earlier Venetian humanists, the younger Barbaro broke ranks when he took up his pen in his *De coelibatu* [*On Celibacy*] to justify a decision not to marry, and thus not to assume the full responsibilities devolving on a patrician statesman—the role his ancestry directed him

¹² King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 383–85 and *passim*.

¹³ Patricia H. Labalme, *Bernardo Giustiniani: A Venetian of the Quattrocento* (Rome, 1969); King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 381–83 and *passim*.

¹⁴ For Domenico Morosini, see King *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 409–10 and *passim*; for Paolo Morosini, see *ibid.*, pp. 412–13 and *passim*.

¹⁵ Lauro Quirini, *Lauro Quirini umanista: studi e testi*, ed. Konrad Krautter et al. (Florence, 1977); King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 419–21 and *passim*.

¹⁶ King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 409–10 and *passim*; also Isotta Nogarola, *Complete Writings: Letterbook, Dialogue on Adam and Eve, Orations*, ed. and trans. Margaret L. King and Diana M. Robin (Chicago, 2004).

to fulfill.¹⁷ Barbaro's is the first voice, among the patrician humanists, of a cultural shift that would be effectuated around the turn of the century.

From the 1490s, humanism became one pursuit among many in a diversified, pluralistic intellectual culture which still featured many patri-cians but also an increasingly large number of commoner and migrant intellectuals.

All the humanists named thus far were patricians, most from the inner circle of the Venetian ruling elite. Commoner humanists also contributed to the city's humanist culture: many of foreign origin and some of the elevated class of the *cittadini originari*. But they, too, were assimilated to the political goals of the aristocracy, either through ties of friendship (the physicians Giovanni Caldiera, Giovanni Marcanova, and Alessandro Benedetti) or patronage (the foreigners Filippo da Rimini, Pietro Perleone, Niccolò Sagundino, Marc'Antonio Sabellico, and Giorgio Valla, among others).¹⁸ For the most part, the commoner humanists wrote works supportive of the ideology of the patrician intellectuals who were their patrons, and of the Venetian state that in many cases employed them. Characteristic of these are the works of citizen physician Giovanni Caldiera, based on Aristotle's *Ethics*, proposing an ideal of the solitary, the domestic, and the

¹⁷ Branca, "Ermolao Barbaro and Late Quattrocento Venetian Humanism"; Vittore Branca, "Ermolao Barbaro e l'Umanesimo veneziano," in Branca, ed., *Umanesimo europeo e umanesimo veneziano*, pp. 193–212; "L'Umanesimo veneziano alla fine del Quattrocento: Ermolao Barbaro e il suo circolo," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, 123–75; and relevant essays reprinted in Branca, *La sapienza civile*; also Branca's editions of Ermolao Barbaro's the *Epistolae, orationes et carmina*, ed. Vittore Branca (Florence, 1943), and his *De coelibatu, De officio legati*, ed. Vittore Branca (Florence, 1969). See also King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 322–23 and *passim*; King, "Caldiera and the Barbaros"; and Pio Paschini, *Tre illustri prelati del Rinascimento: Ermolao Barbaro, Adriano Castellesi, Giovanni Grimani* (Rome, 1957), pp. 9–42; and for Barbaro's *De officio legati*, see Douglas Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries: Humanism and Professions in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 2002), pp. 101–20.

¹⁸ For these figures generally, excluding Benedetti, see King, *Venetian Humanism*, Tables 6 and 7 at 291 and 298–99 respectively, and individual profiles of each: Caldiera at pp. 344–45; Marcanova at pp. 392–93; Filippo at pp. 406–07; Perleone at pp. 415–17; Sagundino at pp. 427–29; Sabellico at pp. 425–27; and Valla at pp. 439–40. For Caldiera, see also King, "Caldiera and the Barbaros"; and King, "Personal, Domestic, and Republican Values in the Moral Philosophy of Giovanni Caldiera," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28.4 (1975), 535–74, repr. in King, *Humanism, Venice, and Women: Essays on the Italian Renaissance*, facsimile repr. no. 4 (Aldershot/Burlington Vt., 2005). For Marcanova, see also Elizabetta Barile, Paula C. Clarke, and Giorgia Nordio, *Cittadini veneziani del Quattrocento: i due Giovanni Marcanova, il mercante e l'umanista* (Venice, 2006). For physician and historian Alessandro Benedetti, see Giovanna Ferrari, *L'esperienza del passato: Alessandro Benedetti filologo e medico umanista* (Florence, 1996). For Filippo, see also King, "A Study in Venetian Humanism at Mid-Quattrocento"; and for Valla, see Gianna Gardenal, Patrizia Landucci Ruffo, and Cesare Vasoli, *Giorgio Valla tra scienza e sapienza*, ed. Vittore Branca (Florence, 1981).

political life in Venice; or that of the Riminese immigrant Pietro Perleone consoling the patrician Jacopo Antonio Marcello on the death of his son; or the narration by Greek-born Niccolò Sagundino on the origin and nature of the Ottomans.

But patricians themselves predominated, both in number and in capacity to shape the direction of culture. Across three generations of Venetian humanism (1400–90), in which 92 active humanists may be identified, 64 were members of the patriciate.¹⁹ Many of these were intensely involved in the diplomatic and military events of Venetian expansion on the *ter-raferma* and sat on the government councils that directed that enterprise. Given these demographic characteristics, it is unsurprising that the message of Venetian humanism was essentially political. What were the prevailing themes announced by these voices enlisted in the service of the state?

Humanist Politics and Historiography

The humanist enterprise in Venice was effectively an exercise in national security. Often preemptively, sometimes defensively, the authors presented in their treatises, letters, and orations a vision of Venice as socially cohesive, benevolent, and just: an expanded version, more copious in theme and rich in detail, of the Venice presented by the chroniclers of the 13th and 14th centuries. A few examples will trace out the two major themes: that of the Venice's exceptional social harmony; and that of the benevolence and effectiveness of the Venetian state.

Francesco Barbaro's treatise *On Marriage*, mentioned above, ironically belongs as much to the genre of political comment as to that of domestic handbook: for his stated aim is to establish an ideal of marriage that would most promote the demographic and cultural success of the Venetian nobility.²⁰ The nobleman must choose a wife, Barbaro argues, whose physical, intellectual, and moral qualities will enhance her husband's status and ensure the wellbeing of their offspring. Similarly, Giovanni Caldiera's trilogy, based on the three Aristotelian books of moral philosophy, aims to guide the formation of an individual and the management of

¹⁹ For a statistical analysis of the 92 humanists identified in King, see *Venetian Humanism*, esp. Table 8, at p. 299.

²⁰ King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 92–98.

the family in a way that best supports the purposes of the Venetian state.²¹ Lauro Quirini's *On Nobility*, finally, written as part of an ongoing discussion whether the assignment of nobility should be based on virtue rather than on birth, firmly supports the notion of an innate nobility inherited across generations—the assumption necessary to justify the existence of Venice's patrician caste.²² All these three works, among others, enunciate social and cultural themes supportive of the prevailing Venetian ideology.

Other works directly address the mechanisms of Venetian rule and the objects of Venetian policy. Lauro Quirini's *De republica* [*On the Republic*], written 1449–50, builds on Aristotle's reasoning in the *Politics* a defense of the natural right to rule of an aristocracy of birth, and it identifies the aristocratic republic as the ideal form of the state.²³ Where Quirini had offered abstract arguments, Paolo Morosini vigorously defended Venice in two works—the *Defensio venetorum ad Europae principes contra obtrectatores* [*Defense of the Venetians to the Princes of Europe against her Detractors*] and the *Lettera a Ciccho Simonetta* [*Letter to Cicco Simonetta* (secretary to the dukes of Milan)]—against a storm of verbal attacks and insinuations aroused during the 1450s and 1460s, when the city was in the forefront of discussions about responses to the Ottoman capture of Constantinople. In a third work, the *De rebus ac forma reipublicae venetae* [*On the Substance and Form of the Venetian Republic*], addressed to the German humanist Gregor Heimburg who had invited Morosini to do so, he described the structures and functions of the Venetian government.²⁴ Like Quirini, Morosini identified the Venetian nobility as the key factor in the city's success, basing his argument not on references to Aristotle but on the centuries-long dedication to liberty of that class whose ancestors had first sought refuge from tyrants on the islands of the lagoon. A generation later, Paolo's namesake Domenico Morosini presented the pattern of an ideal republic patently modeled on Venice in his *De bene instituta re publica* [*On the Well-Managed Republic*, 1497/1509].²⁵ The secret to political success for Morosini is the harmonious interaction of the three social classes—the great, the middling, and the small—and the control of

²¹ King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 98–112; King, "Caldiera and the Barbaros"; King, "Personal, Domestic, and Republican Values."

²² King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 118–24.

²³ King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 124–32.

²⁴ King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 132–40.

²⁵ King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 140–150. The work was begun in 1497 and remained unfinished at Morosini's death in 1509.

government by political leaders drawn from the middling group of wealthy merchants and *literati*.

In the 16th century, younger generations of patrician humanists continued to dominate the discussion of politics in Venice. Conspicuous among these are the two luminaries, Gasparo Contarini and Paolo Paruta: the former a thinker of great depth who migrated from an early career as statesman to a later one as Church reformer and, eventually, cardinal; the latter a statesman as well, and a prolific author of treatises and histories. Contarini's *La repubblica e i magistrati di Vinegia* [*The Republic and Magistracies of Venice*, 1544; first published in Latin, 1524] describes the apparatus of Venetian government councils as a perfect system and the skeleton of an ideal republic;²⁶ it is, as Angelo Ventura characterizes it, a "*summa* ideologica degli ottimati veneziani,"²⁷ a culminating statement of Venetian patrician ideology. Paolo Paruta, like the two Morosinis before him, applauds the service of the nobleman to Venice, if obliquely, in his dialogue discussing the relative merits of the active and contemplative life (the *Della perfezione della vita civile* [*On the Perfection of Civic Life*], 1579) which more greatly approves the active, by which the well-born and well-bred may serve the state.²⁸ In the same vein is the second of his *Discorsi*

²⁶ Gasparo Contarini, *La repubblica e i magistrati di Vinegia* ed. Vittorio Conti (Florence, 2003) [repr. facsimile of 1544 ed. [Italian]]; *De magistratibus et Republica Venetorum* (Basel, 1544) [Latin, based on orig. Latin ed. 1526]; *De repubblica venetorum libri quinque* (Leiden, 1628) [Latin, expanded ed.]. For Contarini, see especially Gigliola Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini: un magistrato veneziano al servizio della cristianità* (Florence, 1988); Gigliola Fragnito and Francesca Cavazzana Romanelli, eds., *Gaspare Contarini e il suo tempo: atti del convegno, Venezia, 1-3 Marzo 1985* (Venice, 1988); Constance M. Furey, *Erasmus, Contarini, and the Religious Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, 2006); Elisabeth G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform* (Berkeley, 1993); also Felix Gilbert, ed., "Religion and Politics in the Thought of Gasparo Contarini," in Gilbert, *History: Choice and Commitment* (Cambridge Mass., 1977), pp. 247-67; James B. Ross, "The Emergence of Gasparo Contarini: A Bibliographical Essay," *Church History* 41.1 (1972), 22-45; and James B. Ross, "Gasparo Contarini and his Friends," *Studies in the Renaissance* 17 (1970), 192-232.

²⁷ Angelo Ventura, "Scrittori politici e scritture di governo," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, p. 532.

²⁸ For Paruta, see A. Baiocchi, "Paolo Paruta: ideologia e politica nel Cinquecento veneziano," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 3 (1976-76), 203-82; also Cirillo Monzani's introduction to Paolo Paruta, *Opere politiche di Paolo Paruta*, which contains the *Della perfezione* and the *Discorsi politici*. See also discussions of Paruta in Oliver Logan, *Culture and Society in Venice, 1470-1790: The Renaissance and its Heritage* (New York, 1972); William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley, 1968); and in the essays of Gino Benzioni, "La cultura: contenuti e forme," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 6 (1994): *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi and Paolo Prodi, pp. 515-88, and Ventura, "Scrittori politici." Selections from Paruta's *Vita civile* are published in Gino Benzioni and Tiziano Zanato, eds., *Storici e politici veneti del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Milan/Naples, 1982), at pp. 493-642; the same volume also

politici [*Political Discourses*], published posthumously in 1599, in which he celebrates the political apotheosis of the Venetian republic. With Paruta, as Gino Benzoni writes, the Venetian polity ascends to its final perfection: it is a "utopia achieved," ruled by philosophical patricians under whose optimal governance cheerful and obedient subjects flourish in order and concord.²⁹

Read throughout Europe, Contarini's work was the principal vehicle for the dissemination to a broad audience of a view of Venice as a flawlessly functioning republic embodying the perfection of justice. But his work was only the clearest and most available statement of the arguments also presented by Quirini, the Morosinis, Paruta, and other patrician humanists, delineating the profile that Venice projected of itself as uniquely well ordered and benevolent—what scholars have called the "myth of Venice." Modern historians had no need to construct that myth of Venice; Venetians themselves already inhabited a misty Parnassus of their own construction. That happy state was the fruit of a symmetry between governance and culture, specifically humanist culture: in both realms, the patriariate ruled, tolerating no resistance or dissent. It is their dual hegemony that accounts for what Ventura sees as the "theoretical poverty and scarce originality" of Venetian political production.³⁰ The same may be said of the historical writing generated by the same patrician humanist milieu.³¹

contains a large selection from the same author's *Della istoria della guerra di Cipro*, at pp. 5–132.

²⁹ Benzoni, "La cultura: contenuti e forme," p. 536.

³⁰ Ventura, "Scrittori politici," p. 515.

³¹ For historical writing in Venice of the 14th to 16th centuries, see Pertusi ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al secolo xvi*; also an overview in Eric W. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1981), pp. 62–74, 77–86; for the 15th to 16th centuries, see Benzoni, "La cultura: contenuti e forme"; Benzoni, "Scritti storico-politici"; Gaetano Cozzi, "Cultura politica e religione nella 'pubblica storiografia' veneziana del '500," in *Bollettino dell'Istituto di Storia della Società e dello Stato Veneziano*, 5–6 (1963–64), 215–94; Franco Gaeta, "L'idea di Venezia," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 565–641; Gaeta, "Storiografia, coscienza nazionale e politica culturale nella Venezia del Rinascimento," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, pp. 1–91; Felix Gilbert, "Biondo, Sabellico and the Beginnings of Venetian Official Historiography," in T. K. Rabb and J. E. Seigel, eds., *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 90–106, repr. in J. G. Rowe and W. H. Stockdale, eds., *Essays Presented to Wallace K. Ferguson* (Toronto, 1971), pp. 275–93; Ventura, "Scrittori politici"; for the 16th and 17th centuries, see Gino Benzoni, "La storiografia e l'erudizione storico-antiquari: gli storici municipali," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 67–93; Benzoni, "La vita intellettuale," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7 (1997): *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, pp. 813–919; Benzoni and Zanato, eds., *Storici*

About 150 years after Doge Andrea Dandolo took up the writing of the chronicles *Brevis* and *Extensa*, the nobleman Bernardo Giustiniani, a great statesman and humanist if not quite a doge, composed his *De origine urbis Venetiarum rebusque gestis a Venetis* [*History of the Origin of Venice and the Deeds Accomplished by the Venetians*, 1492], both a monumental history of the city and a magnificent work of propaganda.³² Like the earlier chroniclers and the humanists Lauro Quirini and Paolo Morosini, Giustiniani focused on the origin of Venice, a moment of foundation by the free and untainted progenitors of the Venetian aristocracy in which the city's cosmic destiny was encompassed. As important was Giustiniani's *De divi Marci Evangelistae vita, translatione et sepulturae loco* [*On the Life, Translation, and Place of Burial of Saint Mark the Evangelist*], a companion work which focused on the second founding of Venice with its acquisition of the relics of its patron saint.³³

About the time of Giustiniani's death—his history was published posthumously—there was launched “by public decree” a series of official histories of Venice.³⁴ Several of the authors were patricians, in whom culminated the tradition of historical writing about Venice by a member of the highest stratum of the political class that had begun with Doge Andrea Dandolo. Others were not, among them the first, who wrote seemingly on speculation and was rewarded with a post later recognized as that of “public historian” only after his manuscript had been approved for publication. Marc'Antonio Sabellico's *Historiae rerum venetiarum* [*History of Venice*], dedicated to the doge and Senate, was published in 1487.³⁵ Notably,

e politici, “Introduzione,” pp. xiii–xcviii; Piero Del Negro, “Forme e istituzioni del discorso politico veneziano,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 407–36; and Del Negro, “Proposte illuminate e conservazione nel dibattito sulla teoria e la prassi dello stato,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 5, part 2 (1986): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica Il Settecento*, pp. 123–45. Bouwsma's *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty* also discusses the ideal of republican liberty in 16th-century Venetian thought.

³² Bernardo Giustiniani, *De origine urbis venetiarum rebusque gestis a Venetis*, in Joannes Georgius Graevius, ed., *Thesaurus antiquitatum et historiarum Italiae*, vol. 5, part 1 (Leiden, 1722), cols 1–171.

³³ Bernardo Giustiniani, *De divi Marci evangelistae vita, ejus translatione & sepulturae loco*, in Joannes Georgius Graevius, ed., *Thesaurus antiquitatum et historiarum Italiae*, vol. 5, part 1 (Leiden, 1722), cols 1–171.

³⁴ Prior to Sabellico's appointment, an attempt was made to secure the labor of Flavio Biondo; see Gilbert, “Biondo, Sabellico.”

³⁵ A collection of the sequence of six histories from the 15th to 17th centuries in Apostolo Zeno, ed., *Degli storici delle cose veneziane, i quali hanno scritto per pubblico decreto*, 10 vols (Venice, 1718–22). The recent edition of Pietro Bembo's *History of Venice*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Ulery (Cambridge, Mass., 2007) includes an English translation.

Sabellico was not a Venetian patrician but a professional man of letters and an immigrant from small-town Vicovaro, and he was surely gratified to be assigned a well-paid sinecure (200 ducats per year) in recognition of his service.

Once established, the tradition of official historiography was continued without interruption from the Renaissance through the Baroque era. Sabellico was followed by Pietro Bembo (of whom more below), writing in humanist Latin, and then, variously in Italian and Latin, by Paolo Paruta, Andrea Morosini, Niccolò Contarini (whose more realistic and ironic account was not, uniquely, published),³⁶ Battista Nani, Michele Foscarini, and so on into an 18th-century blur: a "Settecento silence."³⁷ Produced self-referentially by the ruling class for its own purposes as well as for propagandistic use abroad, and characterized, with the exception of the future doge Contarini's maverick contribution, by a mounting blandness, these histories try the patience of the modern scholar: "Without interruption the overabundance of the historiographical production," laments Gino Benzoni, the myth of Venice "can also die of boredom!"³⁸

Even as the public historians supplied their bland narrative of political events, patrician memorialists and diarists recorded the ripe details of current events without humanist polish or pretense. An early instance of the genre is the chronicle of Antonio Morosini, only recently recovered.³⁹ While the earlier parts of the extant work are based on previous chronicles, the remainder is quite different: it is a journalistic record of events as they occurred during the author's lifetime (Morosini died in 1433), as news reached him, studded with transcriptions of letters and other documents that came to his hand, with his sometimes sour comments attached and

³⁶ A large selection in Benzoni and Zanato, eds., *Storici e politici*, pp. 135–442. For Contarini, see Gaetano Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini: Recherche sul patriziato veneziano agli inizi del Seicento* (Venice, 1958).

³⁷ Benzoni, "La storiografia e l'erudizione storico-antiquaria," p. 75. These histories, Contarini's excepted, are published in vols 2–10 of Zeno, ed., *Degl'istorici delle cose veneziane*.

³⁸ Benzoni, "La storiografia e l'erudizione storico-antiquaria," pp. 76, 74.

³⁹ Antonio Morosini, *The Morosini Codex*, vol. 1: *To the Death of Andrea Dandolo (1354)*; vol. 2: *Marino Falier to Antonio Venier (1354–1400)*; vol. 3: *Reign of Michele Steno (1400–1407)*, ed. Michele Pietro Ghezzi, John R. Melville-Jones, and Andrea Rizzi (Padua, 1999, 2000, 2005). Although the three volumes published to date take us to 1407, Morosini was still writing up to 1413/14. Domenico Malipiero's *Annali veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500*, ed. Francesco Longo and Agostino Sagredo (Florence, 1834–44), written later in the 15th century, may also be seen as representative of this genre.

with no attempt—blessedly, for the historian—to revise the whole in a polished narrative.

Morosini's chronicle prefigures the diaristic literature that appeared from about 1500, most famously the diaries of Marin Sanudo (Marino Sanuto) and Girolamo Priuli.⁴⁰ Both were patrician writers, like Morosini; Sanudo, however, whose diary would fill 58 printed volumes with fresh and critical observations of daily events, derived from a family of lesser lineage and political rank. Energized by the crisis of the Italian wars, both men brought a sharp eye to the contemporary scene and did not hesitate to probe inconsistencies and platitudes. In these works and others of the genre we have news of floods, fires, and famines, births and deaths, the departures of ships and arrivals of foreigners, the scams of charlatans and counterfeiters, love affairs and courtesans. Also providing lively commentary on events in Venice and elsewhere were the letters of merchants, written without pretense of learning.⁴¹

From the same era date complete series of *relazioni* by ambassadors and rectors of Venetian subject cities, which constitute in themselves a historiographical genre: an "original and inimitable creation of Venetian culture."⁴² In the 17th century, a new trend was signaled by the work of two historians, neither of them a member of the Venetian patriciate: the Servite friar Paolo Sarpi, of whom more below, and the Cypriot mercenary Enrico Camerino Davila, who wrote a vivid account of the French religious wars.⁴³ Their works, as well, were descended from humanist models but were executed with a verve and ferocity not found in the texts commissioned by public decree.

⁴⁰ Girolamo Priuli, *I Diarii (1494–1512)*, ed. Arturo Segre (1 [1912]) and Roberto Cessi (2–4 [1938]), 4 vols (Città di Castello, 1912, 1938); Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin, et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1903; repr. Bologna, 1969); an anthology of excerpts from the latter: Marino Sanudo, *Venice, Città Excelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo*, ed. Patricia H. Labalme and Laura Sanguineti White; trans. Linda L. Carroll (Baltimore, 2008). The genre of "diary as chronicle" thoroughly examined by Neerfeld, *Historia per forma di diaria*. Sanudo also wrote other historical works of a non-official variety; see especially *Le Vite Dei Dogi*, ed. Angela Caracciolo Aricò, 2 vols (Padua, 1989, 2001).

⁴¹ For examples from the 14th and 16th centuries respectively, see John E. Dotson, *Merchant Culture in Fourteenth Century Venice: The Zibaldone Da Canal* (Binghamton, N.Y., 1994); and Ugo Tucci, ed., *Lettres d'un marchand vénitien Andrea Berengo (1553–1556)* (Paris, 1957).

⁴² Ventura, "Scrittori politici," p. 553. For the *relazioni*, see also Donald E. Queller, "The Development of Ambassadorial *relazioni*," in John R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 174–96.

⁴³ Benzoni, "La cultura: contenuti e forme," p. 561.

Christian Humanism in Venice

As well as in their political and historical works, the humanists of Venice reaffirmed their allegiance to traditional religious values, composing a range of Christian works: hagiographies, devotional texts, histories of religious orders, calls for reform.⁴⁴ The large component of Christian writing in the Venetian intellectual tradition, overwhelmingly by members of the nobility both lay and clerical, lends some support to the claim of ardent piety put forth by the city's advocates. Just as Manfredo Tafuri has shown the importance of religious themes in Venetian architectural programs and culture more generally,⁴⁵ and Edward Muir has shown how religious rituals were adapted for political purposes,⁴⁶ a recognition of the religious commitment of the intellectual elite is essential for an understanding of Venetian intellectual life.

Humanist authors of hagiographies include four high-ranking patrician humanists: in chronological sequence, Leonardo Giustiniani, who dedicated his translation from the Greek of the *Vita beati Nicolai Myrensis Episcopi* [*Life of Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra*] to his brother Lorenzo Giustiniani, the first patriarch of Venice; Ludovico Foscari, who dedicated his *Gesta martyrum Victoris et Coronae* [*Deeds of the Martyrs Victor and Corona*] to Jacopo, son of Doge Francesco Foscari; Francesco Diedo, who dedicated his *Vita Sancti Rochi* [*Life of Saint Roch, 1478/1479*] to the citizens of Brescia; and Bernardo Giustiniani, son of Leonardo, who (as discussed above) blended political and religious messages in writing the history of Saint Mark the Evangelist's life and Venetian destiny.⁴⁷ Notably, not one of these noble hagiographers was a cleric.

⁴⁴ For the Christian dimensions of Venetian humanist thought, Margaret L. King, "L'Umanesimo cristiano nella Venezia del Quattrocento," in Bianca Betto, Giorgio Cracco, and Giorgio Fedalto, eds., *La chiesa di Venezia tra medioevo ed età moderna*, 15–54 (Venice, 1989; repr. in King, *Humanism, Venice, and Women: Essays on the Italian Renaissance*, facsimile repr. no. 3 (Aldershot/Burlington, Vt., 2005).

⁴⁵ Manfredo Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge, Mass., 1989) [Italian orig., Turin, 1985].

⁴⁶ Muir, *Civic Ritual*.

⁴⁷ See King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 384, 376, 361, and 382. See also the "Hand List" of humanist authors of saints' lives, which includes Venetian authors Ermolao Barbaro the Elder; Pietro Barozzi, Francesco Diedo, Ludovico Foscari, Bernardo Giustiniani, Leonardo Giustiniani, Moro Lapi, Marcantonio Sabellico, Niccolò Sagundino (Nicolaus Secundinus), and Jacopo Zeno, in Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York, 2005), pp. 327–494.

Other humanists wrote devotional and theological works. Candiano Bollani, for example, wrote commentaries on the biblical book of Genesis (1466) and the song (the “Magnificat”) of the Virgin Mary; Paolo Morosini (see above) a treatise on predestination and free will (1471/1482); Girolamo Donato various works defending the Roman primacy of the Church; and Marco Dandolo, a translation of Greek commentaries on the psalms and the powerful evangelical work *Praeconium sanctissime crucis* [*Proclamation of the Most Holy Cross*, 1509/1513].⁴⁸ All four of these men were statesmen entrusted with the most sensitive diplomatic missions and repeatedly elected to high office.

Clerical humanists, also noblemen, contributed as well—as one would expect—to the corpus of religious works: Pietro Barozzi, bishop of Padua, a treatise *De modo bene moriendi* [*On Dying Well*]; Gregorio Correr, abbot of San Zeno (Verona), among others, the *Epistola ad Ceciliam virginem de fugiendo saeculo* [*Letter to the Virgin Cecilia on Fleeing this World*, 1443], encouraging the learned Cecilia Gonzaga, daughter of the ruler of Mantua, to enter the convent; and Cardinal Marco Barbo, translations from the Greek of works by pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople (458–471).⁴⁹

Two prominent authors on religious themes transitioned from important political careers to equally lofty clerical appointments. Fantino Dandolo, grandson of Doge Andrea Dandolo and eventually bishop of Padua, wrote a *Compendium catholicae fidei* [*Compendium of the Doctrines of the Catholic Faith*].⁵⁰ Gasparo Contarini, most famously, a faithful servitor of Venice until in 1535, was made cardinal (though still a layman) when he reached age 52. He had already written on the office of the bishop—as he had on the government of Venice, as discussed above. In his later years, as the Roman response to the Protestant revolt coalesced, he labored for ecclesiastical reform, coauthoring the 1537 *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* [*Recommendation for the Reformation of the Church*].⁵¹

⁴⁸ For Bollani, King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 340–41; for Paolo Morosini, pp. 412–13; for Donato, pp. 366–68; for Dandolo, pp. 359–61.

⁴⁹ For Barozzi, see King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 333–35; for Correr, pp. 355–57; for Barbo, pp. 327–28. See also Correr’s letter to Cecilia in Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr., eds., *Her Immaculate Hand: Selected Works by and about the Women Humanists of Quattrocento Italy*, trans. King and Rabil, 2nd ed. (Binghamton, 1992; repr. N.Y., 1997), pp. 91–105.

⁵⁰ For Dandolo, see King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 357–59.

⁵¹ For Contarini as reformer, in addition to titles cited in n28 above, see Gigliola Fragnito, “Cultura umanistica e riforma religiosa: il ‘De officio episcopi,’” in Fragnito, ed., *Gasparo*

Philosophy on the Rialto

Just as humanism in Venice inclined to Christian themes, so too did it attend to philosophy. Whereas in other settings humanists were often dismissive of scholastic methodology, and indifferent to Aristotelian metaphysics, in Venice, humanism and philosophy commingled in the same individual and in the same circles. Two factors help explain the melding of humanist and philosophical enthusiasms in Venice: first, the nearby presence of the University of Padua; second, the openness of the city to the Greek tradition.

Already in Petrarch's day, as has been seen, members of the Venetian elite trained at Padua⁵² (which by Senate decree after 1407 was the only university at which Venetian nobles were permitted to study). There many took degrees in both canon and civil law, an excellent preparation for future statesmen; but many also studied the arts curriculum, which, since the Trecento, was thoroughly saturated by Aristotelianism. The circulation of people and ideas between Venice and Padua, and its resultant impact on the culture of Venice and its aristocracy, is evident throughout the Renaissance and Baroque eras.⁵³

Venetian contact with the Greek tradition also had long, indeed ancient roots, as Venice during its early centuries had been subject to Byzantium, and both in political and commercial interactions, Venetians interacted

Contarini, pp. 79–211; and Hubert Jedin, "Gasparo Contarini e il contributo veneziano alla riforma cattolica," in Branca, ed., *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 2:271–80.

⁵² Grendler profiles the University of Padua and its relationship to Venice in Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 2002). For the philosophical culture of Padua, with ramifications for Venice, Cesare Vasoli, "La logica," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 35–73; for the 13th- and early 14th-century setting, see Girolamo Arnaldi, "Il primo secolo dello studio di Padova," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 2 (1976): *Il Trecento*, pp. 1–18; Franco Alessio, "Filosofia e scienza: Pietro da Abano," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, 2 (1976): *Il Trecento*, pp. 171–206; and Vasoli, "Marsilio di Padova," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 2 (1976): *Il Trecento*, pp. 207–37.

⁵³ For the later period, in addition to titles earlier cited in n. 54, see also Carlo Maccagni, "Le scienze nello studio di Padova e nel Veneto," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 135–71; and Adriano Carugo, "L'insegnamento matematica all'università di Padova prima e dopo Galileo," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 115–99. For Venetians and Paduan academic culture in the early 17th century, see also Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007).

frequently with Greek speakers.⁵⁴ But prior to the late 14th century, there was little awareness of the Greek intellectual tradition, which had continuously pursued the study of ancient philosophy and literature. At that point, especially as the Ottoman advance in Asia Minor and the Balkans threatened the regime at Constantinople, Greek scholars began to filter into Venice as to other Italian centers—the presence of Demetrio Cidone was critical; and Italian natives traveled to Constantinople to pursue Greek studies and acquire Greek books.⁵⁵

Among the most conspicuous of these, in the early decades of the 15th centuries, were Francesco Filelfo and Guarino Veronese, whose fortunes were promoted by members of the Venetian nobility.⁵⁶ The strong and early influence of Greek learning in Venice accounts for the facility with Greek that many of the humanists demonstrated in their own translations of Plutarch and the Greek fathers, their support for other translation projects (Francesco Barbaro's for the Byzantine scholar George of Trebizond's translation of Plato's *Laws*, for instance), and their courting of the Byzantine uniate cardinal Bessarion, whose library Venice eventually acquired.

Contacts with Padua and with Byzantine scholarship also meant that Venetian culture was uniquely open to philosophical pursuits. Already in 1397, by the bequest of Tomà Talenti, a naturalized citizen of Florentine origin and one of the four "friends" who had so discomfited Petrarch, a school for philosophical study was founded in Venice, located at the Rialto.⁵⁷ This was a curriculum at the advanced secondary level, which

⁵⁴ For contacts between Venice and Byzantium, see Gino Benzoni, ed., *L'eredità greca e l'ellenismo veneziano* (Florence, 2002), especially the contributions of Giorgio Ravegnani, Gherardo Ortalli, and Ennio Concina; Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988); Giorgio Ravegnani, *Bisanzio e Venezia* (Bologna, 2006); and Maria Francesca Tiepolo and Eurigio Tonetti, eds., *I greci a Venezia: atti del convegno internazionale di studio: Venezia, 5–7 novembre 1998* (Venice, 2002); also for Venetian officials in Constantinople, Monique O'Connell, *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore, 2009).

⁵⁵ For contacts with Greek learning, see Benzoni, ed., *L'eredità greca*, especially contributions of Silvia Ronchey, Marino Zorzi, Luigi Balsamo, and Jean-Claude Margolin; and Pertusi, "L'umanesimo greco dalla fine del secolo XIV agli inizi del secolo XVI," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, pp. 177–264. Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962) is still useful. For Greek scholars in Italy generally, see Nigel G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1992).

⁵⁶ For Filelfo, Guarino, and the Venetian humanists, see King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 18–23 and *passim*.

⁵⁷ For the Rialto school, see Fernando Lepori, "La scuola di Rialto dalla fondazione alla metà del Cinquecento," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981), part 2, pp. 539–605; and

prepared students for entry to the University of Padua for studies in medicine, science, and philosophy. The audience included some well-educated members of the citizen class, but even more the intellectual elite of the patriciate, as well as visitors from abroad. By the end of the 15th century, the chair of philosophy was repeatedly held by members of the Venetian patriciate.

In addition, Venetian humanist writers interested themselves in philosophical discourse and wrote on philosophical themes. Bernardo Bembo, for instance, corresponded with the Florentine Platonist Marsilio Ficino,⁵⁸ while Ermolao Barbaro the younger, who defended rhetoric over philosophy in a debate with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, wrote commentaries on Aristotle's *Ethics* and the *Materia medica* [Medical Works] of Dioscorides and translated the *Paraphrases* of Themistius from the Greek.⁵⁹ In the 16th century, the statesman Sebastiano Erizzo (1525–85) translated several dialogues of Plato, while the cardinal Daniele Barbaro, better known as a patron of arts and letters and the translator into Italian of the architectural work of Vitruvius, edited the commentaries on Aristotle of his great-uncle Ermolao Barbaro the younger and wrote a treatise himself, left unfinished at his death, on sundials.⁶⁰

Bruno Nardi, "Letteratura e cultura veneziana del Quattrocento," in Vittore Branca, ed., *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 3:181–203. In addition to the Rialto school for philosophy, two other public schools were founded in 1443 and 1460 for humanistic skills, intended for *cittadino* boys preparing for secretarial careers, and advanced studies in rhetoric, for which see especially Nardi, "Letteratura e cultura," p. 189; and James B. Ross, "Venetian Schools and Teachers Fourteenth to Early Sixteenth Century: A Survey and a Study of Giovanni Battista Egnazio," *Renaissance Quarterly* 29.4 (1976), 521–66. For schooling more generally, including the many private masters and schools, see Enrico Bertanza and Giuseppe dalla Santa, *Maestri, scuole e scolari in Venezia fino al 1500* (Vicenza, 1993); Gherardo Ortalli, *Scuole, maestri e istruzione di base tra medioevo e Rinascimento: il caso veneziano* (Vicenza, 1993); Manlio Pastore Stocchi, "Scuola e cultura umanistica fra due secoli," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, pp. 93–121; and for the later period, see Baldo, *Alumni, maestri*; also the overviews in Gino Benzoni, "Le accademie e l'istruzione," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4: *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 789–816; and Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore, 1989), pp. 51–70. See also Grendler's contribution in the present volume.

⁵⁸ For Bembo, see Nella Giannetto, *Bernardo Bembo, umanista e politico veneziano* (Florence, 1985); and King, *Venetian Humanism*, pp. 335–39.

⁵⁹ Ermolao Barbaro the Younger was for decades the principal figure in Venetian humanism of interest to Vittore Branca; see above, nn. 11, 19.

⁶⁰ For Barbaro, see Pio Paschini, "Daniele Barbaro letterato e prelate veneziano del Cinquecento," *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 16 (1962), 73–107; for both Barbaro and Erizzo, see Logan, *Culture and Society*, *passim*. For philosophy in Venice and the Veneto generally from the 16th to 17th centuries, see Luigi Oliveri, ed., *Aristotelismo veneto e scienza moderna: atti del 250 anno accademico del Centro per la Storia della Tradizione*

Bembo, Erizzo, and the two Barbaros were all patricians, but a similar range of interests characterizes some commoner and foreigner intellectuals working in Venice. Notable was Giorgio Valla, a native of Piacenza who taught in Venice from 1485 until his death and who published translations of Archimedes, Euclid, and Ptolemy, which he incorporated into his massive encyclopedia *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus* [*On Seeking and Fleeing Things*], published by Aldus Manutius in 1501.⁶¹ Typical of the blending of disciplinary interests in Venice, Valla the expert on philosophical and mathematical texts held the chair of rhetoric at the city's San Marco school.

From the 16th to 17th centuries, scientific and mathematical ideas traveled regularly between Venice and Padua, as during the years of Galileo's stay in the region.⁶² The influence of Paduan circles on the architect Palladio and for the development of proto-Enlightenment libertinism have recently been noted by scholars.⁶³

Carnival in Venice

From the late Trecento to the late Quattrocento, the patriciate appropriated the new movement of humanism and so established dominance over the intellectual culture of Venice. Their works, primarily political or historical, supported the prevailing political orthodoxy, not distant in its claims from what modern scholars have called the "myth of Venice": an assertion of the uniqueness, justice, and benevolence of the Venetian state and the cohesion, loyalty, and piety of Venetian citizens. When not pursuing explicitly political themes, they often took up Christian or philosophical

Aristotelica nel Veneto, 2 vols (Padua, 1983); and Giovanni Santinello, *Tradizione e dissenso nella filosofia veneta fra Rinascimento e modernità* (Padua, 1991).

⁶¹ For whom see Gardenal et al., *Giorgio Valla*.

⁶² Maccagni, "Le scienze nello studio di Padova e nel Veneto." For Galileo in the Veneto, see Carugo, "L'insegnamento matematica"; Manlio Pastore Stocchi, "Il periodo veneto di Galileo Galilei," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 37–66; and the essays in *Galileo Galilei e la cultura veneziana: atti del convegno di studio promosso nell'ambito delle celebrazioni Galileiane indette dall'Università degli Studi di Padova (1592–1992)*, Venezia, 18–20 Giugno 1992 (Venice, 1995). Also relevant is the profile of Francesco Barozzi: Paul L. Rose, "A Venetian Patron and Mathematician of the Sixteenth Century: Francesco Barozzi (1537–1604)," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 1 (1977), 119–78.

⁶³ Guiseppe Barbieri, *Andrea Palladio e la cultura veneta del Rinascimento* (Rome, 1983); Tracy Elizabeth Cooper, *Palladio's Venice: Architecture and Society in a Renaissance Republic* (New Haven, 2005); and Muir, *Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance*.

ones that were harmonious with a view of a perfectly ordered cosmos also consonant with their political ideals.

These patterns continued from the Renaissance era into the Baroque, when official historiography, political theorizing, and scientific dilettantism were still the pursuits of the patriciate. In the meantime, however, the culture broadened and diversified, exploding into areas where the patriciate did not dominate, although individual nobles might participate—in so doing engaging in a counter-cultural resistance to the fortress of patrician intellectual solidarity. Whereas Venetian culture had been strictly monitored by elite interests in the earlier period, from about 1500, Venice resounded with multiple voices and interests. Venice became the most vibrant and tolerant of the capitals of Catholic Europe, the site of an ongoing cultural festival, a “carnival of ideas,” to borrow the term of Nicola Bonazzi,⁶⁴ to match its unique annual celebration of *Carnevale*.

Among the many changes that took place during the pivotal period from the late 15th to early 16th century that precipitated this cultural shift, printing was paramount.⁶⁵ By the 1470s, Nicholas Jenson had established a press in Venice; over the next 150 years Venice was in the forefront of printing centers in Europe. As elsewhere, the first printing ventures were reprints of the Bible along with patristic, scholastic, and devotional texts. In Venice, that pattern changed with the arrival of Aldo Manuzio, who

⁶⁴ From the title of Nicola Bonazzi's work: *Il carnevale delle idee: l'antipedanteria nell'età della stampa, Venice, 1538–1553* (Bologna, 2007).

⁶⁵ For the origins of printing in Venice, see especially Nicholas Barker, *Aldus Manutius and the Development of Greek Script and Type in the Fifteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1992); Carlo Dionisotti, *Aldo Manuzio: umanista e editore* (Milan, 1995); Martin Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson and the Rise of Venetian Publishing in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 1991); Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaca, 1979); and Neri Pozza, “L'editoria veneziana veneziana da Giovanni da Spira ad Aldo Manuzio: i centri editoriali di terraferma,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 2, pp. 215–44. Marino Zorzi reviews the whole course of the Venetian relation to the book from the pre-print period to the late Cinquecento in “Dal manoscritto al libro,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4: *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 817–958; also the relevant sections of Marino Zorzi, *La Libreria di San Marco: libri, lettori, società nella Venezia dei dogi* (Milan, 1987). A useful overview for the period 1500 to the 1570s in Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven, 2007), 232–71. For book circulation and print culture more generally, see Lisa Pon and Craig Kallendorf, eds., *The Books of Venice/Il Libro Veneziano* (Venice/New Castle, Del., 2009); and Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto, 2005). For the publication of works by women, see Diana M. Robin, *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago, 2007); and for the world of the merchant-printers, see Claudio Di Filippo Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere: lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome, 1988).

aimed to publish all the Latin and Greek classical texts—and so he did, making available in clear, portable editions the whole tradition of classical antiquity on which the Renaissance intellectual project rested. The printing of Greek texts, in particular, lured Greek scholars to Venice, as well as the northerner Desiderius Erasmus, who stayed with Aldo to guide his own *Adages* through the press.

After Aldo's death, his son took over the business. By that time, more than 60 other printing houses—the big names of Giunta, Scoto, and Giolito joining that of Manuzio—had established themselves in the city, which remained throughout the 16th and 17th centuries a center for the production and circulation of books. Marino Zorzi estimates that between 15,000 and 30,000 editions were printed in Venice during the 16th century, when about 15 per cent of the population possessed book, a proportion rising to about 23 per cent of the patriciate and 64 per cent of ecclesiastics.⁶⁶ The peak of printing activity was reached around 1550,⁶⁷ a steep decline followed after 1650, though even in the Seicento, Venice was “the city of books and booksellers.”⁶⁸

Personal libraries grew in size and substance as printed volumes joined older manuscripts, the largest rising to some 800 volumes including classics, history, devotional works, philosophy, law, medicine, astronomy, cosmography and travel accounts.⁶⁹ The library collected by the 15th-century statesman and humanist Bernardo Bembo, which passed to his literary son and future cardinal Pietro, contained 50 or so volumes that Aldo consulted in his publishing endeavors.⁷⁰ The collection, subsequently

⁶⁶ Marino Zorzi, “La circolazione del libro a Venezia nel Cinquecento: biblioteche private e pubbliche,” *Archivio veneto* 177 (1990), 117–89; and more briefly, Zorzi, “La circolazione del libro: biblioteche private e pubbliche,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 6: *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, ed. Cozzi and Prodi, pp. 589–614.

⁶⁷ Claudia Di Filippo Bareggi, “L'editoria veneziana fra '500 e '600,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 6: *Dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, ed. Cozzi and Prodi, pp. 615–50.

⁶⁸ Marino Zorzi, “La produzione e la circolazione del libro,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7: *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Benzoni and Cozzi, pp. 968–69.

⁶⁹ Marino Zorzi, “Le biblioteche veneziane, espressione di una singolare civiltà,” in Lisa Pon and Craig Kallendorf, eds., *The Books of Venice / Il Libro Veneziano* (New Castle, Del., 2009), pp. 1–30, offers an overview from early medieval times to the end of the republic; also Zorzi “La circolazione del libro”; Zorzi, *La libreria di San Marco*; Marino Zorzi, “Dal manoscritto al libro,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 4: *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 817–958; and Zorzi, “La produzione e la circolazione del libro.”

⁷⁰ For the Bembo collection, see Massimo Danzi, *La biblioteca del Cardinal Pietro Bembo* (Geneva, 2005); also Giannetto, *Bernardo Bembo*, pp. 259–358.

dispersed, of another humanist and cardinal, Domenico Grimani, contained 392 precious Greek manuscripts.⁷¹

The most important library was that acquired by the state of Venice itself, now the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. In the Trecento, Venice had tried but failed to acquire Petrarch's library. That loss still rankled when, in 1468, the Greek-born scholar Bessarion, now a Catholic and cardinal of the Church, bequeathed to the Republic his invaluable library laden with rare Greek manuscripts snatched from Constantinople before its collapse. Stored away in trunks in the Ducal Palace, these were made available to the public from 1560, when the Marciana library was completed, designed by Jacopo Sansovino, of which Bessarion's collection of 1000 or so precious books is the core. Another 2000 arrived as gifts before 1600, and by 1623 the collection had expanded to nearly 6000 manuscripts and printed books.

The libraries, public and private, were concentrated in the hands of elites and tended to classical, theological, and academic texts—mostly in Latin, some in Greek. But at the same time, the production of books in the vernacular, more likely to gain a popular audience, had exploded. The patrician humanist and author Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) had advocated the use of the vernacular in his *Prose della vulgar lingua* (1525) and modeled it in his dialogues, *Gli asolani*.⁷²

Meanwhile, the translation of classical texts into Italian accelerated, while the presses turned out volumes of sonnets and letters—featuring quite a few by female authors; conduct and how-to books; books of magic and necromancy, pornography, heretical works, and other forbidden

⁷¹ Aubrey Diller, Henry Dominique Saffrey, and Leendert Gerrit Westerink, *Bibliotheca graeca manuscripta Cardinalis Dominici Grimani (1461–1523)* (Mariano del Friuli [Gorizia], 2003).

⁷² For Bembo, see Pietro Bembo, *Pietro Bembo's Gli Asolani*, trans. Rudolf Brand Gottfried (Bloomington, 1954); Carol Kidwell, *Pietro Bembo: Lover, Linguist, Cardinal* (Montreal/Ithaca, 2004); and Christine Raffini, *Marsilio Ficino, Pietro Bembo, Baldassare Castiglione: Philosophical, Aesthetic, and Political Approaches in Renaissance Platonism* (New York, 1998). A convenient edition of Bembo's major works in Pietro Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua; Gli Asolani; Rime*, ed. Carlo Dionisotti (Milan, 1989); but see also Bembo, *Pietro Bembo's Gli Asolani*, trans. Gottfried; Pietro Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua: l'editio princeps del 1525 riscontrata con l'autografo Vaticano Latino 3210*, ed. Claudio Vela (Bologna, 2001); and related conference papers in Silvia Scotti Morgana, Maro Piotti, and Massimo Prada, eds., *Prose della volgar lingua di Pietro Bembo: Gargnano Del Garda (4–7 ottobre 2000)* (Milan, 2000).

works; musical works,⁷³ Jewish books,⁷⁴ and travel literature.⁷⁵ The last genre flourished especially in Venice, whose merchants had long traveled the exotic realms of north Africa, the Levant, and East Asia, which Marco Polo had memorialized in the early years of the Trecento and which Ambrosio Bembo, who set out in 1671, vividly described.⁷⁶ It was unsurprisingly a Venetian from solid *cittadino* ranks who produced the first massive compilation of travel literature: Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi* [*Navigations and Voyages*; 1550–59], which would have many imitators, including the perhaps better-known compilation of the Englishman Hakluyt.⁷⁷

This profusion of books was supplied by savvy publishers who supported a large population of authors known as the *poligrafi*, “writers of

⁷³ For which see Jane A. Bernstein, *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press, 1539–1572* (New York, 1998); and Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (New York, 2001); also Martha Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley, 1995); and some discussion in Fenlon, *Ceremonial City*.

⁷⁴ Including those of Leone da Modena and Sara Copio Sullam, residents of Venice's own ghetto; for whom see Modena's *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah*, ed. and trans. Mark R. Cohen (Princeton, 1988); and Sullam's *Sarra Copia Sullam: Jewish Poet and Intellectual in Early Seventeenth-Century Venice*, ed. and trans. Donald Harrán (Chicago, 2010). For the cultural life of the ghetto, see also the essays in Robert C. Davis and Benjamin C. I. Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001), esp. Robert Bonfil, “Cultural Profile,” in Robert C. Davis and Benjamin C. I. Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* pp. 169–88; David B. Ruderman, “Medicine and Scientific Thought: The World of Tobias Cohn,” pp. 189–208; and David Harrán, “Jewish Musical Culture: Leon Modena,” in Robert C. Davis and Benjamin C. I. Ravid, eds., *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, pp. 209–21.

⁷⁵ For Venetian travel literature in general, see Giuliano Lucchetta, “Viaggiatori e racconti di viaggio nel Cinquecento,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 2, pp. 433–89; Lucchetta, “Viaggiatori, geografi e racconti di viaggio dell'età Barocca,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 201–50; also Elizabeth Horodowich, “Armchair Travelers and the Venetian Discovery of the New World,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 36.4 (2005), 1039–62. For the related issue of Venetian cultural relations with the Ottomans, see Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2006); Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i turchi* (Florence, 1975); and Preto, “I turchi e la cultura veneziana del Seicento,” in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 4 (1984): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 2, pp. 313–41. Also related to the proliferation of travel literature is the construction of global maps, such as the great *mappamondo* by the Camaldolese monk Moro Lapi: for which Piero Falchetta, *Fra Mauro's World Map: With a Commentary and Translations of the Inscriptions* (Turnhout/Venice, 2006).

⁷⁶ Ambrosio Bembo, *The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo*, ed. Anthony Welch, trans. Clara Bargellini (Berkeley, 2007).

⁷⁷ A convenient selection in Richard Hakluyt, *Hakluyt's Voyages*, ed. Richard David (Boston, 1981).

many things" or, as one scholar characterizes them "cultural laborers."⁷⁸ Independent of courts and patronage mechanisms, these authors wrote for the market, venturing into the new and risky domains of social criticism and libertinism. At their head was the dazzling Pietro Aretino, who elevated pornographic themes and personal invective into a literary art.⁷⁹

The libertinism of the *poligrafi* connected them to the culture of high profile prostitutes and courtesans and to the private gatherings where the satirical comedies of *il Ruzante* (as the Paduan dramatist Andrea Beolco was known) were performed.⁸⁰ and where the poet Veronica Franco reigned as an *cortigiana onesta*, a courtesan whose intellectual skills and personal charm raised her above the category of prostitute and permitted her to mingle with—though never marry into—the nobility.⁸¹ Mostly hosted by patrician *letterati* and amateurs, this network of salons, *cenacoli*, or *ridotti* sprang up as sites for the exchange of news, witticisms, and insights.

More elevated in tone were the academies that arose in Venice and neighboring Padua, where the cultivated gathered to talk of matters literary and scientific. They had their roots in the circles that gathered around Ermolao Barbaro the Younger, the printer Aldo Manuzio, and not far from the capital at Asolo, attended by Pietro Bembo, around the former queen of Cyprus, Venetian noblewoman Caterina Cornaro. They then proliferated in the later decades of the 16th century; among the many Gino

⁷⁸ Benzoni, "La cultura: contenuti e forme," p. 581. For the *poligrafi*, see Giovanni Aquilecchia, "Pietro Aretino e altri poligrafi a Venezia," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 2, pp. 61–98; Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530–1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco & Ortensio Lando* (Madison, 1969); and Lucia Nadin Bassani, *Il poligrafo veneto Giuseppe Betussi* (Padua, 1992).

⁷⁹ See Pietro Aretino, *Dialogues*, ed. and trans. Raymond Rosenthal (Toronto, 2005); and Aretino, *The Letters of Pietro Aretino*, trans. Thomas Caldecot Chubb (Hamden, Conn., 1967). See also Christopher Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice: Researches on Aretino and His Circle in Venice, 1527–1556* (Florence, 1985).

⁸⁰ Linda L. Carroll, *Angelo Beolco (Il Ruzante)* (Boston, 1990); Carroll, "Dating 'the Woman from Ancona': Venice and Ruzante's Theater After Cambrai," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31.4 (2000), 963–85; Giorgio Padoan, "Angelo Beolco, ditto il Ruzante," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 343–75; and Padoan, "La commedia rinascimentale a Venezia: dall sperimentazione umanistica alla commedia 'regolare,'" in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 377–465.

⁸¹ For Franco, see Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago, 1992); also Veronica Franco, *Poems and Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret F. Rosenthal (Chicago, 1998), which includes letters that vividly depict the cultural scene of the 16th-century Venetian salon; and separately, Veronica Franco, *Lettere*, ed. Stefano Bianchi (Rome, 1998).

Benzoni lists alphabetically for the period 1550–1630: “gli Accesi, gli Acuti, gli Adorni, . . . I Cacciatori, I Desiosi, I Dubbiosi, . . . I Gelosi, I Generosi, gli Immaturi, gli Immobili, gli Incogniti . . ., I Laboriosi, I Marittimi, . . ., gli Ordinati, I Pellegrini, I Peripatetici, l'accademia Platonica, I Riuniti . . ., l'accademia Veneziana o della Fama, l'accademia Veneziana seconda, I Venturati.”⁸² The *Infiammati*, or “flaming ones,” who gathered at Padua in the 1540s had many Venetian patricians on its rolls; as did the “Incogniti,” or “unknown ones,” also at Padua, a principal center of Italian anti-Romanism in the early Seicento.⁸³

Other circles of *litterati* and the not-so-learned were heterodox. Venice was a center for the publication, circulation, and discussion of prohibited books—not least by members of the nobility⁸⁴—encouraged both by the proximity of Venice to the Protestant north and by the boldly autonomous Venetian church which, though orthodox, resisted instruction or intervention from Rome. The path Venice chose was exceptional. Refusing to accept the operation of the Roman Inquisition in its territories, it nonetheless instituted a Venetian process, latitudinarian in many ways but still unfriendly to any forces disruptive of social harmony.⁸⁵ It suppressed, mildly at first and later steadily, the publication of illicit books,⁸⁶ gatherings of reform-minded activists, especially among the artisan ranks,⁸⁷ and the rumblings of witchcraft and feigned sanctity.⁸⁸

Tensions between Venice and Rome became intense in the late decades of the 16th century and exploded in the crisis of 1606, when the newly ascended Pope Paul V rebuked Venice with a papal interdict. At this pivotal moment, the heroic voice that rose to defend Venice against

⁸² Benzoni, “La cultura: contenuti e forme,” p. 584, drawing his names from Michele Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia*, 5 vols (Bologna, 1926–30).

⁸³ For the Incogniti, see especially Monica Miato, *L'Accademia degli Incogniti di Giovan Francesco Loredan: Venezia (1630–1661)* (Florence, 1998); and Muir, *Culture War*; see also Benzoni, “La vita intellettuale”; and Zorzi, “La produzione e la circolazione del libro.”

⁸⁴ Federica Ambrosini, *Storie di patrizi e di eresia nella Venezia del '500* (Milan, 1999).

⁸⁵ Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Printing Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton, 1977); Pio Paschini, *Venezia e l'Inquisizione Romana da Giulio III a Pio IV* (Padua, 1959).

⁸⁶ For the impact of Inquisition and censorship on printing and book circulation, see Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*; Zorzi, “Dal manoscritto al libro”; and Zorzi, “La produzione e la circolazione del libro.”

⁸⁷ For which see John J. Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley, 1993).

⁸⁸ Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550–1650* (Oxford, 1989); Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore, 2001).

Roman overreaching was not a patrician humanist but the commoner Paolo Sarpi (1552–1626). This Servite friar, a *habitué* of the patrician salon hosted by the Morosinis, deconstructed papal claims in a series of works, in the sum a devastating critique supported by a masterful grasp of ecclesiastical history—later also demonstrated in his history of the Council of Trent (first published in London, 1619, its patron none less than King James I).⁸⁹ Reflecting the political interests of the *giovani* faction of Venetian nobles and embodying various streams of heretical and anticlerical thought, Sarpi addressed himself to a European audience. In Sarpi terminate many of the disparate strands of Venetian intellectual culture as it shifted from the Renaissance to the Baroque era.

Sarpi's magnificent witness to the repressions of an established Church would echo in the Protestant north and down to the Enlightenment. But after the early 1600s, no other lions roamed in Venice to give free utterance to their dissent—except on the stage, where lions strode still, and opera and drama continued to comment on the life of the city—until the city, as a free republic, was no more.⁹⁰

The Worth of Women

The vibrant settings of cultural exchange that prevailed in 16th-century Venice uniquely afforded an opportunity for women to give expression to feelings and perceptions they must long have harbored but were barred from mentioning. Now more interested in publishing vernacular works of general interest for mass audiences than classical fare for the few, the presses of Venice hungrily acquired the manuscripts of women authors, including those of the foreigners Vittoria Colonna and Tullia d'Aragona, as

⁸⁹ In Paolo Sarpi, *Opere*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi and Luisa Cozzi (Milan/Naples, 1969), 721–1016.

⁹⁰ For opera in Venice, see Beth L. Glixon and Jonathan E. Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Oxford, 2006); Wendy B. Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Berkeley, 2003); Muir, *Culture Wars*; and Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley, 1991). See also the special issue of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 36.3 (2006), 331–417, offering an extended colloquy on opera in 17th-century Venice with contributions by Edward Muir, Mauro Calcagno, Wendy B. Heller, Dennis Romano, and Ellen Rosand; and the complex exploration of the relations between performance and time in Venetian culture by Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *Song and Season: Science, Culture, and Theatrical Time in Early Modern Venice* (Stanford, 2007).

well as those of the natives Franco, discussed above, and Gaspara Stampa.⁹¹ Not only did the presses give women's voices an outlet—if in part because a male audience of readers found those products titillating—but also they presented for general consideration books about women, such as *poligrafo* Lodovico Dolce's best-selling 1545 *Dialogo della institution delle donne* [*Dialogue on the Education of Women*], presented as his own work although in fact a translation and plagiarism of the influential 1524 treatise on the *Education of a Christian Woman* by the Valencian-born humanist Juan Luis Vives. In this setting, the woman humanist Cassandra Fedele, daughter of a clan of Venetian *cittadini* of the secretarial order, was a celebrity, trotted out in her advanced old age to give Latin orations to visiting royalty.⁹²

At around the turn of the 17th century, three female authors boldly challenged prevailing attitudes towards women; extraordinary, for a single city, for a brief moment, to produce this concentrated message of female resistance, unequalled, if at all, until later in the century when the salons of France and the drawing rooms of England also yielded a harvest in their different genres of female expression.⁹³ Written in the hours before her death in 1592, though not published until 1600, Moderata Fonte's *Worth of Women* displays in dialogue seven women representing different combinations of age, marital status, and attitudes toward the condition of women and excoriates the prevailing system of male control in elite

⁹¹ See Gaspara Stampa, *Works*, ed. and trans. Jane Tylus (Chicago, 2010). For women writers and Venetian publishers, see especially Robin, *Publishing Women*, especially chapter 2 and appendices; and with some caution, the profiles of Colonna, d'Aragona, Stampa, Franco, and Moderata Fonte (discussed below) in Irma B. Jaffe, with Gernando Colombardo, *Shining Eyes, Cruel Fortune: The Lives and Loves of Italian Renaissance Women Poets* (New York, 2002). For the Petrarchism of Colonna and Stampa, see Ulrike Schneider, *Der weibliche Petrarkismus im Cinquecento: Transformationen des lyrischen Diskurses bei Vittoria Colonna und Gaspara Stampa* (Stuttgart, 2007). For the literary activity of women more broadly, see Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400–1650* (Baltimore, 2008). The "Other Voice in Early Modern Europe" series published by the University of Chicago Press (Chicago) publishes volumes of works in translation by all of the figures named.

⁹² Cassandra Fedele, *Letters and Orations*, ed. Diana M. Robin (Chicago, 2000).

⁹³ For these women as a group (individuals to be considered below), see: Ginevra Conti Odorisio, *Donna e società nel Seicento: Lucrezia Marinelli e Arcangela Tarabotti* (Rome, 1979); Claire Lesage, "Femmes de lettres à Venise aux xvi^e et xvii^e siècles: Moderata Fonte, Lucrezia Marinella, Arcangela Tarabotti," *Clio: Histoire, Femmes et Sociétés* 13 (2001), 135–44; and Patricia H. Labalme, "Venetian Women on Women: Three Early Modern Feminists," *Archivio veneto*, ser. 5, 197 (1981), 81–109. In addition to those named here, see also Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Irene Di Spilimbergo: The Image of a Creative Woman in Late Renaissance Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 44.1 (1991), 42–61.

Venetian society.⁹⁴ Also published in 1600, Lucrezia Marinella's *Nobility and Excellence of Women* responds to a male detractor while distilling the discussions of women's nature in philosophical texts from antiquity to her own time.⁹⁵

During the early 1600s, Arcangela Tarabotti, finally, wrote several works trumpeting the injustice of coerced monachization, of which she had herself been a victim, a practice by which property-holding Venetian fathers limited the claims on patrimony and protected the interests of their sons and, to a lesser extent, married daughters.⁹⁶ Unlike Fonte and Marinella, who both came from families of professionals and acquired an education at home in the libraries of their male kin, Tarabotti was of humbler origin and was an auto-didact dependent on the slim talent and few books available in the convent to which she had been consigned. This preparation was sufficient, however, to produce the shockingly angry *On Paternal Tyranny*, the most famous of her *oeuvre*, which lambasted fathers in particular and male self-interest in general for the denigration of women.⁹⁷

This explosion of female outrage sputtered out after the early 17th century. But in a last daring gesture, as it seems in retrospect, in 1678 a Venetian woman descended from one of the greatest families of the Venetian nobility—although one that had declined over the previous century, as had so many, in wealth and status—was examined for and succeeded in obtaining a degree in philosophy from the University of Padua. Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia was in fact, it can be affirmed now that controversy has settled, *la prima donna laureata del mondo*, the world's first woman university graduate; and none would succeed her for about 200 years.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Moderata Fonte, *The Worth of Women: Wherein is Clearly Revealed their Nobility and their Superiority to Men*, ed. and trans. Virginia Cox (Chicago, 1997). For Fonte, see, in addition to titles previously cited: Paola Malpezzi Price, *Moderata Fonte: Women and Life in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Madison, N.J., 2003); and Naomi Yavneh, "Lying-in and Dying: Moderata Fonte's Death in Childbirth and the Maternal Body in Renaissance Venice," *Rinascimento* 43 (2003), 177–203.

⁹⁵ Lucrezia Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men*, ed. and trans. Anne Dunhill, intro. Letizia Panizza (Chicago, 1999). For Marinella, see in addition to titles previously cited, Paola Malpezzi Price and Christine Ristaino, *Lucrezia Marinella and the "Querelle des Femmes" in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Madison, N.J., 2008).

⁹⁶ For Tarabotti, in addition to titles previously cited, see Elissa Weaver, ed., *Arcangela Tarabotti: A Literary Nun in Baroque Venice* (Ravenna, 2006); also Meredith K. Ray, *Writing Gender in Women's Letter Collections of the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto, 2009), chapter 9.

⁹⁷ Arcangela Tarabotti, *Paternal Tyranny*, ed. and trans. Letizia Panizza (Chicago, 2004).

⁹⁸ For Cornaro, see Francesco Ludovico Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1646–1684): The First Woman in the World to Earn a University Degree*, ed. Catherine Marshall, trans. Jan Vairo and William Crochetiere (Padua, 1978; Philadelphia, 2007); and

The University of Padua, Venice's own, to which it committed for training its future elite, also validated the education achieved by this young woman who succeeded to the tradition of women's freedom in which Venice had uniquely pioneered. She was uniquely privileged, it is true, having been provided by her father with the best tutors in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and her venture was very much a stratagem to enhance her father's status, much as Tarabotti's monastic confinement served to protect her father's wealth. Nonetheless, it is a signal achievement, trumpeting to the world the capacity of women and the claim they would make, in time, to enter the sacred precincts of advanced learning. Yet there is something empty about the triumph of Cornaro Piscopia, less a sounding of her own instrument than a trumpeted celebration of her father's lineage and her native Venice. Not surprising; by 1678, Venetian culture in general had turned from innovation to preservation.

Venice Preserved

By the late 16th century, even before the late masterpieces of Contarini and Sarpi, Venice had begun to retreat within itself. In these later years, its intellectual production was typified above all by antiquarianism: a comprehensive and meticulous collecting of all things Venetian, both material and verbal.⁹⁹ Already in the 16th century, Giovanni Battista Egnazio (1473–1553) published his *De exemplis illustrium virorum venete ciuitatis* [*Examples of Illustrious Men of the City of Venice*] in 1554,¹⁰⁰ and Francesco Sansovino (1521–83) his *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* [*Venice, Most Noble and Singular City*] in 1581, surveying the visual and cultural marvels of the city.¹⁰¹ Similar works proliferated in the

Patricia H. Labalme, "Women's Roles in Early Modern Venice: An Exceptional Case," in Labalme, ed., *Beyond their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past* (New York, 1980), pp. 129–52.

⁹⁹ For Venetian collectionism, see Lanfranco Franzoni, "Antiquari e collezionisti nel Cinquecento," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 3, pp. 207–25; Simona Savini Branca, *Il collezionismo veneziano nel '600* (Padua, 1964); and Cesare Augusto Levi, *Le collezioni veneziane d'arte e d'antichità dal secolo XIV, ai nostri giorni* (Venice, 1900).

¹⁰⁰ Giovanni Battista Egnazio, *De exemplis illustrium virorum venete ciuitatis, atque aliarum gentium*, ed. Marcus Molinus (Paris, 1554); see also Ross, "Venetian Schools and Teachers Fourteenth to Early Sixteenth Century."

¹⁰¹ Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia, città nobilissima, et singolare* (Venice, 1581; rev. edn ed. Giustiniano Martinioni, Venice, 1663; repr. Farnborough, 1968); see also Elena Bonora, *Ricerche su Francesco Sansovino: imprenditore, librario e letterato* (Venice, 1994).

17th century, along with catalogues and genealogies that also documented the families, fortunes, and heroes of the Venetian past: characteristic is Giacomo Alberici's *Catalogo breve de gl'illvstri et famosi scrittori venetiani* (1605).¹⁰² More sophisticated compilations in the 18th century, the era of the Enlightenment, include Giovanni degli Agostini's (1701–55) invaluable *Notizie istorico-critiche intorno la vita, e le opere degli scrittori viniziani* [*Historical-critical Notices Concerning the Life and Works of Venetian Writers*, 1752–54];¹⁰³ Giovanni Battista Maria Contarini's *Anecdota veneta nunc primum collecta ac notis illustrata* [*Venetian Vignettes Now for the First Time Collected and Annotated*, 1757];¹⁰⁴ Marco Foscarini's (1696–1763) compendious *Della letteratura veneziana ed altri scritti intorno ad essa* [*On Venetian Literature and Other Related Writings*];¹⁰⁵ and Apostolo Zeno's (1669–1715) commentaries, dealing with many figures from Venice and the Veneto, and on Gerardus Joannes Vossius's work on Latin historiography in his *Dissertazioni vossiane* [Vossian Commentaries; 1752–53].¹⁰⁶

And on into the 19th century and the era of Risorgimento continued the memorialization of Venice by reverential modern scholars now burdened by the consciousness of the extinction of the Republic that had reigned for more than a millennium.¹⁰⁷ in Emanuele Cicogna's (1789–1868) six-volume *Delle iscrizioni veneziane* [*Venetian Inscriptions*, 1824–53];¹⁰⁸ Samuele Romanin's (1808–61) ten-tome collection of the documentary high points of the public history in his *Storia documentata di Venezia* [*Documented*

¹⁰² Giacomo Alberici, *Catalogo breve de gl'illvstri et famosi scrittori venetiani, quali tutti hanno dato in luce qualche opera, conforme alla loro professione particolare* (Bologna, 1605).

¹⁰³ Giovanni Degli Agostini, *Notizie istorico-critiche intorno la vita, e le opere degli scrittori viniziani* (Venice, 1752–54).

¹⁰⁴ Giovanni Battista Maria Contarini, *Anecdota veneta nunc primum collecta ac notis illustrata, studio Fr. Joannis Baptistae Mariae Contareni. Tomus Primus* (Venice, 1757).

¹⁰⁵ Marco Foscarini, *Della letteratura veneziana ed altri scritti intorno ad essa*, ed. Francesco Berlan (Padua, 1752; Venice, 1854; repr. Bologna, 1976).

¹⁰⁶ Apostolo Zeno, *Dissertazioni vossiane di Apostolo Zeno, cioè giunte e osservazioni intorno agli storici italiani che hanno scritto latinamente, rammentati dal Vossio* [Gerardus Joannes Vossius] nel iii. libro de historicis latinis... (Venice, 1752–53; repr. Farnborough, U.K., 1970) [orig. pub. in *Giornale de' letterati d'Italia* 9–28 (1712–17); see also Huub Van der Linden, "Apostolo Zeno as Reader and (Re)writer: Acknowledgement of Influence and Anxiety of Authorship," in Lisa Pon and Craig Kallendorf, eds., *The Books of Venice / Il Libro Veneziano* (Venice/New Castle, Del., 2009), pp. 383–410.

¹⁰⁷ For the 19th-century historians of Venice, see Claudio Povoletto, "The Creation of Venetian Historiography," in John J. Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 491–519.

¹⁰⁸ Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna, *Delle Iscrizioni Veneziane*, 6 vols (Venice, 1824–53; repr. Bologna, 1969).

History of Venice, 1853–61],¹⁰⁹ and Pompeo Molmenti's (1852–1928) three-volume *Storia di Venezia nella vita privata* [*History of Venice in its Private Life*, 1879], on the threshold of modernism, a loving memoir of the unofficial existence of Venetians in past centuries.¹¹⁰ The 20th century has seen a further process of memorialization in the publication of chronicles and humanist works of a distant age¹¹¹ and, mostly in the post-war era, the compilation of authoritative essays,¹¹² often first delivered at public conferences, on every aspect of the history of the undying Republic lost, but recovered, reconsidered, and preserved.¹¹³

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¹⁰⁹ Samuele Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, 10 vols (Venice, 1853–61; 3rd ed., Venice, 1972–75).

¹¹⁰ Pompeo Molmenti, *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della Repubblica*, 5th ed., rev. and expanded, 3 vols (1879; Bergamo, 1910–12).

¹¹¹ Examples of these include the publication of the chronicle of Antonio Morosini (*The Morosini Codex*); and of the letters of Francesco Barbaro (*Epistolario*).

¹¹² Many are cited in the notes to this essay, including those edited by Arnaldi and Pastore Stocchi, [*Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–85)]; Branca, ed., [*Storia della civiltà veneziana*, 3 vols (Florence, 1979)], among others; and Benzoni and Menniti Ippolito [*Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002)].

¹¹³ For the reconsideration of the Venetian story, see Martin and Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered*.

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VENETIAN LITERATURE AND PUBLISHING

Linda L. Carroll

Il Quattrocento

Overview

During the early part of the Quattrocento, often called the “century without poetry,” the literary interests of Venetians were limited. They were focused largely on humanistic endeavors, including the translation of major works into the vernacular, and there was little development of vernacular genres.¹ The *Serenissima* was more preoccupied with governance activities—both on the mainland, where it consolidated the governance of its state, and “di là dal mar” [across the sea], where it maintained a maritime state—and a fervor of international commerce. With the exception of the university city of Padua, the mainland towns’ literary activities were associated with the courts of the lords deposed by the Venetians and therefore declined after Venetian conquest. The villa culture that would later offer an alternative was still in the early stages of development. These factors notwithstanding, authors both in Venice and in mainland towns maintained a continuous if low-level activity in a variety of literary genres. As the century moved to a close and the population returned to and even exceeded its pre-Black Death levels, literary and theatrical activity increased significantly. Venice assumed a primary role in the fledgling printing industry, meeting the needs of the growing population with its large number of youth, including university students.²

¹ The section on 15th-century literature, here and below, draws heavily upon Armando Balduino, “Le esperienze della poesia volgare,” in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86) [hereafter *SCV*], vol. 3 (1981): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, pp. 265–367 [vol. 3 is divided into 3 parts, of which the first two are cited in this essay as 3.1 and 3.2]; for humanism, see especially Margaret King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, 1986). Translations, unless otherwise noted, are those of the present author.

² On population, see David Herlihy, “Popolazione e strutture sociali dal XV al XVI secolo,” in *Tiziano e Venezia: Convegno internazionale di studi* (Vicenza, 1980), pp. 71–74.

Literature

A distinctive characteristic of Venetian literary endeavors of the 15th century was the simultaneous adaptation of Tuscan with its literary genres and the development of local genres in the local language. From the earliest years of the century, Venetians purchased and copied manuscripts of the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio (known collectively as the Three Crowns) and maintained personal connections with Tuscan authors. Particularly favored was Petrarch, who had spent lengthy periods in Venice and Padua, concluding his life in Arquà and leaving important manuscripts of his work and numerous followers in the region.

A central figure in these literary activities was Leonardo Giustinian. In addition to collecting humanistic and vernacular manuscripts and copying Petrarch's manuscript of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (also known as the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch's major contribution to vernacular lyric poetry), Giustinian wrote lyric poetry that mingled popularizing and learned genres in a language blending Venetian features with Tuscan ones. His works addressed Petrarchan love themes and religious topics, at times using similar tropes for both. Often still predominating in his works is the sung origin of the lyric, as well as an unusual characteristic of Veneto poetry, a dramatic structure and implied dialogue giving it a theatrical dynamic. The servile relationship with the beloved expressed in Giustinian's poetry displays archaic feudal features influenced by the popularity of chivalric poems in the region, where they were much loved as entertainment and political commentary, and perhaps by the recent acquisition of mainland feudal holdings by leading patrician families including his own.

Quattrocento Venetian authors favored a range of other genres as well. Interest in theater burgeoned over the course of the century. Given impetus by the discovery of 12 lost comedies of Plautus in 1426, this renewed activity expressed itself in presentations of classical plays, then new plays imitating them written in Latin, and finally new vernacular plays. The romance with its faraway places, lightly veiled eroticism, exotic cultures, and magical happenings appealed to the Venetian experience and imagination. Closer to hand were various mainland genres such as the *mariazo* or peasant marriage play popular especially among those attending the University of Padua or spending various periods on the mainland. Other popularizing entertainment genres also flourished among students at the University of Padua, the only one Venetians were allowed to attend, including the obscene, the goliardic, and the *burlesco* (a kind of satire) of Tuscan origin. Also common was *maccheronic* comedy based on bumpkin

Latin fused with dialect. Piazza entertainment included songs and political commentary.

Publishing

In 1470 the first texts were printed in Venice, Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and *Trionfi* [*Triumphs*], by the German printer Vindelino da Spira.³ The next year Boccaccio's *Decameron* appeared, a harbinger of Venice's distinction in producing the largest number of editions of that text. In 1472 in Padua, Bartolomeo Valdezocco printed a landmark edition of the *Canzoniere* from Petrarch's personal manuscript, while Vindelino and others published Dante's *Commedia* [*Divine Comedy*] in Venice. The next few years saw other editions of these major works, accompanied by commentaries and biographies, and additional vernacular and Latin works of the Three Crowns. Quickly following were humanistic works in both Latin and Greek and lucrative university material and entertainment genres for the large youth audience. Popular genres also enjoyed a success paved by the literary activity of the early Quattrocento: among the most popular texts were collections of Leonardo Giustinian's poetry and various genres of light reading including the comic epic and the romance. Popular devotional material included missals, commentaries to biblical texts, and the letters of Catherine of Siena. Piazza performers rushed off to get popular texts published on a few sheets and come back and sell them to the public.

Venice soon developed into Europe's largest and most technologically innovative center of print, drawing leaders in the field distinguished by their cultural programs and technical expertise. Among the *Serenissima's* attractions was its farsighted protection of their work through the *privilegio* (an early form of publisher's copyright) enforced by a senior government commission. Such a fervor of publishing activity could only exist in the context of scholars whose philological expertise was essential to the establishing and correcting of the texts. They were available at the University of Padua and among the growing number of Venetian humanists and illustrious foreign guests such as Erasmus.

³ For publishing, see Tiziana Pesenti, "Stampatori e letterati nell'industria editoriale a Venezia e in terraferma," in *SCV* 4.1 (1983): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, part 1, pp. 93–129; Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaca, 1979).

Aldus Manutius epitomizes this phase of Venetian publishing, his elegant typefaces and fine paper bearing to the world the works of Aristotle, Averroes, and Aristophanes; Ovid, Virgil and Cicero; the plays of Plautus and Terence; Erasmus's translations of Euripides; the enigmatic *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*; the works of Petrarch and Pietro Bembo; prestigious (and lucrative) law texts; and religious works commissioned by prelates as alternatives to popular genres perceived as dangerously eroticizing. For many of the works, Aldus chose the convenient octavo format that could easily be carried by busy merchants, secretaries, and diplomats. He induced high-ranking patricians to back his ventures, whose many values they were quick to recognize in a period in which their profits from the spice and silk trade were sharply reduced by Portuguese competition. Among books' numerous sources of profit to patricians was the supplying of raw materials, especially paper, which they largely controlled. The relative success of Venetian printing may be measured by the single statistic that approximately half of the books printed in Italy in the 16th century were printed in Venice.

For publishing to thrive, it had to reach a sufficient public of readers through extensive distribution networks. Venice and some of its mainland cities offered not only a large population with a relatively high degree of literacy but also easy transportation of goods to numerous markets. An important one consisted of the professors and students at the universities of Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, and others, especially interested in texts of law and philosophy (medicine was a branch of natural philosophy). The number of readers and thus profitability would be increased by a uniform language used by as extensive a public as possible. This pragmatic reason, added to the established Venetian interest in Tuscan literature, contributed to the use by Venetian printers of this non-local language.⁴ It was rendered more glamorous by Bembo's choice of it in his early *Asolani* (1505), set at the storied court of the Venetian former queen of Cyprus. The influence of Venetian printers' use of Tuscan was rendered even greater by the fact that by about 1500 the vast majority of publishing in the Republic had moved to the capital city, with only a few specialized centers still active on the mainland, such as Padua for university texts or Piove di Sacco for sacred books in Hebrew (Venice also had a flourishing Hebrew press). A promising new direction in scholarship is research into

⁴ See Pasquale Sabbatino, *La 'scienza' della scrittura dal progetto del Bembo al manuale* (Florence, 1986).

the sale of Venetian books outside the Republic and outside the peninsula, which promises important insights into the diffusion of ideas.

Reactions to the popularization of printing were not entirely positive. The rapid rate of publication raised concerns that knowledge would be corrupted by untutored printers more interested in profits than in correctly produced texts. Inexpensive copies of classical myths and love poetry, soon translated into the vernacular, became easily available to even the very young and were seen as posing pagan and lascivious models that would loosen their morals. Contemporary entertainment genres and even Bembo's *Asolani* provoked similar concerns. Authors were concerned that their works were more easily appropriated by others or, particularly in the case of theatrical texts that could be obtained by printers from actors, could be printed against their wishes. Printers worried that pirate editions would sharply reduce their profits. Greater fears were raised by the prospect of error-filled copies of religious texts and sermons that would result in heresy and eternal damnation. Such dangers were exacerbated by illustrations, cheaply produced as woodcuts. Civil and religious authorities undertook various efforts at censorship, with some even exhorting the doge to banish printing.

Il Cinquecento

The Early Decades: Wartime Disruption and Renewed Creativity

The early years of the 16th century were not kind to Venetian literature and publishing. Conflicts between Venice and European powers and the Ottoman state, which had begun to crop up in the late 15th century, turned into an almost continuous series of wars. The League of Cambrai, which formed in 1508, arrayed virtually all the powers of Europe against the Republic, provoking a war lasting until 1517 that more than once saw Venice lose control of its mainland dominion. The fighting of much of the war on Venetian mainland territory had a bifurcated effect. On the one hand it absorbed the energies of many leading patricians and, by making supply and distribution virtually impossible, definitively interrupted publishing. On the other, by closing the University of Padua and disrupting much commercial activity, it idled large segments of the readerly public, who turned to various literary, theatrical, and intellectual endeavors as substitutes for their normal activities. Among the genres whose production it stimulated were works in mainland dialects aimed at enhancing the Venetian affiliation of lower-class populations who were

vital to Venice's retaking of the mainland state from the imperial-affiliated upper classes who had seized control after Venetian defeats. Especially important were the peasants, who were also recruited as foot soldiers and crews for the armadas that fought the Ottomans (as was the urban working class) and who provided an agricultural expertise that increased yields on the farm properties that Venetians were increasingly acquiring on the mainland as alternative sources of income and foodstuffs to those lost internationally.

Theater was particularly affected by the wars. Although the formation of the League of Cambrai was followed immediately by a ban on all theatrical productions in Venice, they soon returned, as the need for entertainment and for a space in which pressing issues could be addressed reasserted itself. While Latin and vernacular versions of the plays of Plautus (especially the *Miles gloriosus*) and Terence continued to be staged, interest in political writing and even invective increased with Venetian defeats. Peasants and other lower-class characters entered works, a recurrence of their inclusion in genres such as the *mariazo* during the earlier War of Chioggia, when they also had been crucial to Venetian defense. Some of the works (plays were only a small part of theatrical productions, with sung and recited poetry forming a large component and various kinds of tableaux and spectacles another) centered on peasants who supported Venice against the enemy, a probable form of propaganda. Others, such as the *Alfabeto dei villani* [*The Peasants' Alphabet*] and the *mariazo*, which had continued as entertainment among students at the University of Padua, presented reality-based episodes of peasant lives. Ruzante's *Pastoral* (c.1517), which mixes Arcadian shepherds and peasants, may be one of the few remaining exemplars of a genre of private entertainment undertaken by patricians on country vacations. A further fruit of the turning toward a home-based reality by Venetians now more frequently resident in their city was a new urban genre, the *bulesca*. It dealt with the working class, particularly its less savory aspects such as prostitution and violence, and introduced the use of criminal *gergo* [argot]. The courtly tradition of Italian principates also attracted interest, especially the works of leading figures such as Jacopo Sannazzaro and Serafino Aquilano. It is certain that some Venetians participated in the last of these genres and very likely that they did so in all of them. The famed *zibaldone* [manuscript miscellany] Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana ital. XI, 66, which contains a vast number of works collected over the first three decades of the 16th century in which (pseudo)-rural and courtly works predominate, indicates the intensifying Venetian interest in the cultural and political life of the peninsula and Venice's own role in it.

By the end of the Cambrai wars, Venice had regained much of its mainland dominion. However, after a few years of truce, a new series of wars lasting nearly a decade broke out between Francis I and Charles V, and their allies, for dominion over the Italian peninsula. Those years also saw the rapid spread of the Reform movement and the related revolt of German peasants along the empire's border with the Venetian state which, combined with the wars, led to the infamous 1527 Sack of Rome. It is perhaps no surprise that it was in this period that the other side of state protection of publishing emerged, state censure, which was imposed for the first time by the Council of Ten in 1527, although, like the early bans on theatrical productions, it at first had little effect. Printed texts and the ability to read had now become so widespread that, when combined with real-world forces, they held genuine political threat. By the decade's conclusion, Charles, whom Venice had opposed as a member of the French-allied League of Cognac, had assumed direct or indirect control of all the Italian states except Venice, putting an end to the Republic's ambitions. Through concerted Venetian effort, these wars were kept mostly out of Venetian territory and therefore had less of a direct destructive effect, though their severe financial drain and the defeat of the League caused deep indirect loss and badly depleted the Republic's finances.

Conversely, the important role of culture in human coping with distress resulted in a flourishing in these decades of a wide array of literary and theatrical genres contributing to a broad stream of published works. While classical plays and relatively staid literary comedies continued to be staged, more daring productions were also available. Angelo Beolco (*Il Ruzante*) brought his peasant character to Venice at the invitation of various patrician *Compagnie della Calza* and leading patrician families, participating even in the quasi-state ceremony that heralded the entrance of Federico II Gonzaga marquis of Mantua into the *Immortali* (1520) and the wedding in the Ducal Palace of Doge Antonio Grimani's grandson (1523).⁵ Although the 1525 rehearsal of one of his peasant comedies drew so many high-ranking patricians that the Senate and Council of Ten were unable to meet, it was "totally lascivious and full of dirty words and reviled

⁵ The Tuscan spelling "Ruzzante" is used by some scholars either out of a general preference for Tuscanization or because the name was thus spelled on the author's petition to the Venetian government for the printing of two works. However, in the many documents signed by the author preserved in the *Archivio di Stato* in Padua, he always used a single "z" and the petition may have been drawn up by his patron Alvise Cornaro, possibly on the advice of the Tuscan comic writer Francesco Berni. See Linda L. Carroll, "Introduction," in Carroll, ed. and trans., *Angelo Beolco (Il Ruzante), La prima oratione* (London, 2009), pp. 34–35.

by all.”⁶ The women in the audience were so shocked at what the play said about their cuckolding of their husbands that it was replaced before opening night.

Despite their apparent peasant naiveté, Ruzante's plays engaged with international literary works including Thomas More's *Utopia* and Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, a feature certainly appealing to the Venetian patrician merchant public that frequented northern Europe, some of whom were prominent among his supporters.⁷ The *Calandria* of Bernardo Dovizi (Il Bibbiena) and Niccolò Machiavelli's *Mandragola* [*The Mandrake Root*] were also staged. All of the above met the disapproval of patrician diarist Marin Sanudo (Marino Sanuto), who preferred classical and conventional literary comedy. The incidence of political writing, flavored by various degrees of irony and criticism, increased greatly in the *romanzo cavalleresco* [chivalric romance], including Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* [*Roland Gone Mad*; first edition, 1521; definitive edition, 1532], not published in Venice until 1535. Venice produced the first edition of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* [*The Courtier*] in 1528.

Impetus was given to the move to Tuscan by the publication of grammars, including Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* [*Prose in the Vernacular Tongue*; 1525], based on the archaic form used in the 14th-century works of the Three Crowns. Its fixedness both comforted a public coping with great and threatening change and provided a further advantage to printers. The availability of a wide range of works at a relatively cheap price in a Tuscanizing vernacular in turn stimulated a broad interest in learning to read and write and in learning the rudiments of Tuscan. Printers capitalized on it with chapbooks and manuals such as Giovanni Tagliente's numerous and oft-reprinted books on the alphabet. Continuing the earlier dual tradition, the Venetian press also produced works in language more heavily based on contemporary regional vernaculars. These included Teofilo Folengo's *Baldus*, Francesco Berni's satirical works, *novelle* [short stories], and the songs of the *cantari* who performed in the piazzas. Their success reflected the widespread desire to bolster individual expression against the triumph of a narrowly defined official system of literary and linguistic

⁶ Marino Sanuto, *I Diarii*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1903; Bologna, 1969–70), vol. 37, col. 560.

⁷ Linda L. Carroll, “Ruzante's Early Adaptations from More and Erasmus,” *Italica* 66 (1989), 29–34; *eadem*, “Venetian Attitudes toward the Young Charles: Carnival, Commerce, and Compagnie della Calza,” in Alain Saint-Saëns, ed., *Young Charles V, 1500–1529* (New Orleans, 2000), pp. 13–52.

norms. By this time, the popular publishing industry, both above-board and clandestine, that developed in Venice because of the Republic's tolerance of a wide range of views (except those politically dangerous to it) made it possible for a man of letters to earn a living by his writings, not by royalties, which were paid to publishers until 1545, but by gaining patrons. These conditions gave rise to a new category of writer, the *poligrafo*, who, as the name suggests, wrote in all kinds of genres to appeal to as wide a public as possible. Many of the *poligrafi* active in Venice in these decades came from outside, attracted by these opportunities. Characteristic was Anton Francesco Doni, author of romances and epics that criticized the intellectual and political establishment of other states of the Italian peninsula for their poor government and injustice.⁸

Fantasy and linguistic ebullience in creative tension with an almost documentary realism and the longing to return to a better past continued for another two decades to pour forth in a stream of popular letters, romances, novels, epics, and plays. Collections of letters were particularly favored by the Venetian public because of their importance to merchants and their concern with real-life events. Among the most important of this period was that of Alvise (Luigi) Da Porto relating his experiences in the wars. His translation of the war's tensions into the *novella* of Romeo and Juliet was typical of the centrality of the wars to the period's literature, which also contributed to the works of other participants such as Marco Guazzo.

Stringing together episodes of manly heroes and swooning maidens, works in these genres blended realistic references and elements of fantasy into an amalgam that provided entertainment, the possibility of believing that more powerful forces could be defeated, and a recognition that a feudal system, the Holy Roman Empire, had won the wars. Epitomizing the trend, Ariosto's *Furioso* was so popular that it prompted the writing of a prequel by Ludovico Dolce and translations into dialects including even one aimed at *boari* [cowherds]. Novels featured erotic and heroic elements that frequently involved exotic travel, cross-dressing especially by girls, kidnapped or otherwise lost loves, passionate love, consoling friends, palaces, and delightful gardens. A favorite device was *agnizione* or the recognition that a character believed to be lowborn was actually

⁸ See Giovanni Aquilecchia, "Pietro Aretino e altri poligrafi a Venezia," in *SCV* 3.2, pp. 61–98; Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530–1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco and Ortensio Lando* (Madison, 1969).

the long-lost child of a highborn character and thus eligible for various privileges of the highborn including marrying the highborn beloved. The Greek romance, which was revived in this period, assumed importance because of the prestige of classical literature. Popular were spinoffs from it and from Spanish romances.

Expressionistic literature encompassed a significant element of satire, including the satire of learned genres; indeed, some texts were so controversial that they were first published as individual folios. At the head of this heterogeneous and, given the extent to which many of its participants played with the reformist notions current in the period, heterodox activity was Pietro Aretino. He arrived in Venice in 1527, having alienated both the papal court and the marquis of Mantua. Until his death in 1556, Aretino capitalized on the increased nonconformism and expressionism engendered by the wars and consequent political earthquake, while protecting his interests through his ability to both flatter and pressure the powerful. He invented forms of political and social commentary including the pasquinade, a kind of oracular text satirizing public figures; the prognostication, a faked astrological prediction that manipulated the powerful by threatening to influence public opinion against them; and collections of private correspondence with important figures. His comedies, such as the *Marescalco* [*The Stablemaster*] and *Cortigiana* [*The Courtesan*], and dialogues, such as *Sei giornate* or *Ragionamenti* [*Six Days or Discussions*], indulged in describing the seamy aspects of life.

In these decades Venetian patricians became more personally involved in literary life, some forming sub-groups around Aretino and Bembo, although Aretino seemed to influence both. The principals in Aretino's circle were father and son Lorenzo and Maffio Venier, who engaged in scatological poetry that included a number of pieces directed at courtesans, especially Veronica Franco. She herself was an accomplished poetess and one of a number of women writers to whom Lorenzo's brother Domenico extended the patronage of his own literary salon.

Rooted in the frank and even coarse descriptions of female eroticism of the earlier tradition including the poetry of Giustinian, the plays of Ruzante and the anonymous *Veniexiana* [*The Venetian Matron*] describing the competition of two Venetian patrician women for the sexual favors of a young foreigner, the scatological works expressed an anger against women whose actions did not conform to the patricians' wishes (both beloveds who refused their erotic favors and courtesans who bestowed them at their own choosing to increase their wealth and prestige). Its intensity, reaching even rage, betrayed a deeper and more inchoate source, the decline of the power and wealth of the Republic and its lead-

ing patrician males and consequent limits on their freedom of action and ability to command their own destiny. These factors were accompanied by a new dependence on wives' dowries that, moreover, with the decline in international trade, were invested in more passive and lower-yielding state bonds and agricultural property.⁹ Arriviste non-patricians including peasants, mercenary soldiers, and foreign merchants had assumed greater prominence in the city's life as the Republic required a standing defense force and patricians decreased commercial voyages. The control of these subordinates by the patriciate was no longer as simple as it had been portrayed in the *bulesca*, in which the impending fight between two strong men is settled by the intervention of a patrician. Indeed, by the middle of the century it would take a special trip from heaven by the goddess Peace to do the job in Marin Negro's *La Pace* [*Peace*].

Not coincidentally, in this period patricians began retreating into a new aristocratic leisure that began to find a *locus amoenus* in the exclusive and private country villa. Concomitantly, their intellectual activity increasingly took place within closed circles of shared cultural and political values known as *accademie* [academies].

Other writers involved in expressionistic and satirical genres were the outsider *poligrafi*. Many of them initiated their careers in Aretino's circle, although the Vicentine Girolamo Parabosco, a musician and novelist, was part of Venier's circle. Their works were snapped up by publishers, certain of whom, such as Marcolini, Zoppino, Da Sabbio, and Giolito, specialized in vernacular genres. Their subjects focused on a rejection of humanistic learning and criticism of the lack of political talent and leadership that had triggered the wars and their loss by Italian states. The *poligrafi* connected those phenomena with a subsequent general decline, including moral decay and neglect of justice. With potential reprisals against such criticisms extending even to state assassination, the *poligrafi* made them against anonymous leaders and carefully prefaced their books with praise of named princes. Heterodox religious and moral reform movements, including those energetically pursued in northern Europe, attracted the interest of the *poligrafi* and their readers. Anton Francesco Doni, for example, was involved in the second publication of Thomas More's *Utopia* in Italy, in 1548, translated into Italian by the *poligrafo* Ortensio Lando (the first had occurred in Florence in 1519) and created alternative worlds in several of his works.

⁹ Stanley Chojnacki, "La posizione della donna a Venezia nel Cinquecento," in *Tiziano e Venezia*, pp. 65–70; *idem*, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2000).

Literature in Venetian

A further important component of expressionistic literature was the body of poetry, letters, and comedies written in the Venetian language mainly by members of the city's artisanal classes including Alessandro Caravia, Andrea Calmo, Antonio Molin (Burchiella), and Gigio Artemio Giancarli. Calmo, Molin, and Giancarli even formed an academy to revive the ancient Venetian language. Previous dialect theater, including the plays of Ruzante, provided inspiration, characters and text; Calmo's *Rhodian* [*The Girl from Rhodes*], long attributed to Ruzante, for example, was probably based on a lost original by the Paduan playwright, while Giancarli's *Zingana* [*The Gypsy*] includes a character taken from Ruzante's *Piovana*.

The plays' social views covered a broad spectrum, including both comic and realistic intent. Thus they mocked lower-class characters while yet underlining the injustices and hardships that they suffered. Fishermen and boatmen faithful to good old traditions, and thus the social and political hierarchy dominated by patricians, formed the majority of the characters. Stimulated in part by the plurilinguism of various genres and authors (Plautus, the *novella*, the maccheronic, and the buffoon and piazza traditions), as well as by the presence in Venice of foreigners of many origins, the comedies also frequently included a range of non-Venetian characters. Bergamasque porters, courtesans, Greek merchants, arrogant foreign mercenaries and other strong men, and Slavic charlatans all served as the butts or agents of humor. Comic effect was enhanced by their speaking in their native languages or their garbling of Venetian, at times further distorted by the authors.¹⁰ Some comedies included so many working-class dialects, argots, and foreign languages that they functioned chiefly as a kind of linguistic menagerie.

Dialect theater germinated features of the incipient Commedia dell'Arte. This was an improvisational theater based on type characters called "masks" that developed in the latter half of the century as a substitute for fully written scripts. Letters, such as those of Calmo, began to serve as repertoires of ideas and speeches for theatrical monologues, a feature that would be fully developed in Commedia dell'Arte. Certain stock

¹⁰ Manlio Cortelazzo, "Esperienze ed esperimenti plurilinguistici," in *SCV* 3.2, pp. 183–213; Henry and Renée Kahane, "A Case of Glossism: Greghesco and Lingua Franca in Venetian Literature," in *Mélanges Skok* (Zagreb, 1985), pp. 223–28; Lucia Lazzerini, *Il testo trasgressivo. Testi marginali, provocatori, irregolari dal Medioevo al Cinquecento* (Milan, 1988), pp. 209–13.

figures such as Pantalone, rooted in a character that appears in several Ruzante plays and turned into a full type by Calmo, would become one of the most popular characters of the *Commedia dell'Arte*.

The increasing ability to make a living through staging plays and other forms of spectacle and in publishing plays moved theatrical work toward the kind of professionalization that was also the direction being taken by writing in general. An early sign was the proliferation of *autori* or spectacle organizers in the third decade of the century. These were men who took care of both the material features of the production, such as the construction of temporary stages, and its content, often choosing or even writing material; some even performed in the spectacle. Because performances were largely limited to the season of Carnival, the organizers had to have other work, and many were artisans or intermediaries in a variety of business or governmental functions. Typifying this development was Giovanni (Zuan) Manenti, who organized Carnival spectacles for *Compagnie della Calza* including the 1525 one, ran Venice's first state lotteries, and published a book of exchange tables.

Another feature that has been missed by many scholars is that, even very early in the century, some spectacles were paid for by the attendees, and that the price could be low enough to accommodate the working class.¹¹ The trend would increase over the course of the century, as would professionalization. By 1545, fixed acting troupes had developed, attested by the first known contract in Padua, which also demonstrates the seasonal nature of their work. It does not seem coincidental that the same year saw the first author copyright law. The Venetian patriciate's tolerance of, or perhaps financial need for, spectacles supported by the working class to add to its splendid state rituals and (usually) private *Compagnia della Calza* festivities made the *Serenissima* a (partial) exception to the norm developing in other Italian states that theater served solely as a display of magnificence with which the élite dazzled a subdued populace.

Promising directions for future scholarship include research into the roles that patricians played in publishing and literature and their cultural, economic, and political reasons for doing so, as well as the interrelations between patricians and non-patricians in these spheres.

¹¹ Patricia H. Labalme and Laura Sanguineti White, eds., *Venice, Città Excelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo*, trans. Linda L. Carroll (Baltimore, 2008), p. 492, n. 16.

The Middle Decades: Return to Traditional Values

Post-war expressionism was concluding its course by the fifth and sixth decades of the century, also the period in which civic and religious authorities reasserted and increased their hegemony. Freedom of speech, especially political criticism and the exploration of heterodox views, began to be restricted by both the Venetian government and the Catholic Church, a process that would continue in increments over the next decades.

While Venice's former tolerance of reformist publications had served its strategy of resistance to Charles V, his defeat of the Protestants at Muhlberg in 1547 and the deaths in the same year of Venice's principal allies Francis I and Henry VIII left the Republic unprotected. Seeking an ally in the Church, Venice created a new government commission to assist the local Inquisition. Although it began to burn books almost immediately, the Venetian Inquisition did not at first take the further step of investigating authors and publishers. As the Church developed indices of condemned books, the Venetian government commission monitored local compliance with their implementation. By about 1570 severe state and Church censorship had been imposed on heterodox materials in Venice. Gradually the number of condemned books increased, together with the formalities involved in obtaining permission to publish; controls began to be enforced by surprise visits to bookstores and presses and resulting Inquisition trials. This occurred against the backdrop of Venice's increased need for good relations with its main ally, the Church, in its war against the Ottomans.¹²

During the transitional period comprising the middle decades of the 16th century, as the publication of even such important texts as Machiavelli's works and the *Decameron* was curtailed, translations from Greek and Latin and a variety of devotional works became popular. The most favored entertainment genre, the novel, split into two threads, the serious treatise and the fable, though initial efforts at the more moral direction were met with resistance by a hedonistic culture. Authors of tales, fables, and chivalric novels, in contrast, achieved success by providing entertainment at a remove from realism, their works based on fantastic events occurring in an ancient, Carolingian, Gothic, or Oriental setting

¹² For material in this paragraph, see Paul F. Grendler, "The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press 1540–1605," *Journal of Modern History* 47 (1975), 50–57; Pesenti, "Stampatori," in *SCV* 4.1, pp. 101–02.

though still referring to the elegant life of the well-to-do. Chivalric novels inflamed the longings of the Venetian readerly public, especially female readers, with their stories of valiant knights and their heroic and even warrior women.¹³

Tales served as guides to young men on how to provide an evening's entertainment to young women, a social ritual in Venice at the time, with metaphorical language providing the necessary disguise for allusions to erotic activity. It was the genius of Giovanni Francesco Straparola to first see that this genre was most congenial to Venetians, capitalizing on it in his *Piacevoli notti* (1551, 1553), involving high-born non-Venetians and set in Carnival on the island of Murano among vacation homes. Its roots in local theater, especially that of Ruzante, are evident in a number of peasant tales and in two framing characters: the Ferier Beltrame was a member of the Compagnia della Calza that had most frequently invited Ruzante (the Ortolani or Farmers) and Bishop Casali had attended a scandalous 1526 Ruzante performance.¹⁴

By the final quarter of the 16th century, moral strictures imposed by both civic and religious authorities had largely brought about the demise of the contemporary local chivalric romance. Readers had to content themselves with republications of classical novels and with Spanish works such as *Don Quixote* and translated English and French romances. While the serious *poema* achieved favor elsewhere in the Italian peninsula in the second half of the Cinquecento, it was too strongly associated with the empire to succeed in Venice, though translations and spinoffs of classical *poemi* enjoyed some success. Also of interest to Venetian readers were collections of various kinds of musical and poetic genres associated with courtly culture.

For those authors accepting a standard language, the more polyglot and creative solutions proposed by courtiers such as Castiglione were eclipsed by the need for linguistic systematicity, including as part of authorial professionalization. The settling of the question in favor of Bembo's archaic Tuscan participated in the ascendancy of static systematicity represented in the religious sphere by the Council of Trent and in the philosophical and literary spheres by the imposition of uniform Aristotelian rules and definitions that limited creativity and variation. The Aristotelian revival was

¹³ Ginetta Auzzas, "La narrativa nella prima metà del Cinquecento," in *SCV* 3.2, pp. 103–06.

¹⁴ Sanuto, vol. 40, col. 789. Casali was then English ambassador to Venice.

already evident early in the century in the works of the Vicentine noble Gian Giorgio Trissino. It gained momentum in the 1540s and reached its apogee with the publication of Aristotle's *Poetics* in Latin in 1548, followed swiftly by vernacular versions, and the choice of Aristotelian norms as the basis for educational programs, particularly that of the Jesuits.

Women Writers

The signal literary innovation of this period was the rise of works by Venetian women, no longer confined to characters created by men. The earliest participants in the trend were courtesans such as Gaspara Stampa and Veronica Franco who wrote lyric poetry, often in praise of their male patrician beloveds, an amplification of the cultured accomplishments distinguishing their category. Soon women of the citizen classes such as Modesta Pozzo (also known by her pseudonym Moderata Fonte) and Lucrezia Marinella and even the nun Arcangela Tarabotti were composing Arcadian pastorals, epics, and treatises.

It was the pastoral's status as the lowliest literary genre that permitted it to women writers, while its theme of longing for a lost love and its idealized environment appealed to women authors as well as readers. They found in its rural setting a respite from the hurly-burly of city life and in its world of fantasy and its traditional function as the genre in which complaints against established norms could be expressed a liberation from restrictions on their conduct. The epics written by women feature important and active female characters. Plot twists require them to dress as men, and they excel at the male activities in which they engage; some, as sole heirs, became regents of states. They are not lacking in amorous desires, though they express them within the moral framework of chastity, marital fidelity and patriotic imperatives. At the conclusion of the works, the heroines are not reintegrated into the patriarchal social structure through marriage but remain alone or die.¹⁵ Another genre in which women wrote was the Christian *novella*; in theirs, men underwent a conversion to virtue but women were already virtuous.

Preceded by a male tradition of treatises defending women, at least two women authors, Pozzo and Marinella, penned their own, Marinella in response to a treatise vilifying women by a male author. Marinella

¹⁵ Paola Malpezzi Price and Christini Ristaino, *Lucrezia Marinella and the "Querelle des Femmes" in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Madison, N.J., 2008), pp. 25–37, 84–104.

rejected the claims of Aristotle that male physical superiority engendered social and political superiority. She chastized men for restricting women's sphere of action and failing to record their excellent deeds, which she attributed to fear of female superiority. Stopping short of condemning men, she, as had Pozzo, proposed equality of the sexes.

Biographical factors shared by Pozzo and Marinella that facilitated their work were the support of male relatives and associates and a late marriage age. Another element important to the success and status of many women writers was association with prominent patrons, often including aristocratic or patrician women, though their relationships with male patrons were not always tranquil. Their publishing fortunes varied from that of Pozzo, whose only published work, her treatise defending women, was issued after her death, to Marinella, numerous of whose works enjoyed one or more issuings.

The Stage

Theater participated in this and other trends of the late 16th century that would continue well into the next and even beyond. As censorship increased, remaining comedies adhered more closely to established social norms and were more frequently published for reading in private. On the stage, several trends developed. The masks of Arcadia became established, as did the Commedia dell'Arte's semi-realistic masks such as the peasant and the soldier. A light-hearted genre, the *commedia ridicolosa* [*silly comedy*], mixed Arcadian literary characters with realistic peasant ones (one of the first known attestations was Ruzante's *Pastoral*, c.1517). Professional Italian troupes took Commedia dell'Arte to international venues including Germany, France, and England, where it and other forms of Italian theater influenced local authors including Shakespeare, a topic that is generating promising new scholarship.¹⁶

Tragedy, which was strongly associated with princely forms of government, received virtually no attention in Venice, though important texts were written by mainland imperialists. *Sofonisba* (1515), by the Vicentine Gian Giorgio Trissino, is the first known Italian tragedy. The preference for

¹⁶ Major works in this growing field are Louise George Clubb, *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (New Haven, 1989), and the numerous volumes written or edited by Michele Marrapodi, including his *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Rewriting, Remaking, and Refashioning* (Aldershot/Burlington, Vt., 2007).

emotionalism over rationalism that would mark later theater and opera first manifested itself in the Paduan Sperone Speroni's *Canace* (1542), while the Paduan Carlo Dottori was the only noteworthy local author of tragedies. The epic poem, with similar imperialist associations, remained similarly neglected.

With women more active in the cultural sphere, it was possible for actresses to flourish on the Venetian stage, as did the most famous of her day, the Paduan Isabella Andreini, discovered by the important theatrical entrepreneur Flaminio Scala. She shared the literary ambitions of contemporary actors, setting as her goal the respected status of author, which she achieved through the publication of lyric poetry, a pastoral play, and other works. She managed patronage in a shrewd progression from Venice to the French royal circle and back, especially cultivating noblewomen. She even capitalized on the popularity of Aristotelian norms by alluding in her works to the muteness and material nature of animals, reflecting Aristotle's definition of human superiority in language and spirit. She further managed her image with a woodcut published in her works showing her in expensive clothing and jewels and insisted on her status as a professional actress and, later, a member of an *accademia*. Her preferred theatrical form was the pastoral, then achieving great popularity, whose chastity and delicacy of sentiment suited her noblewoman dedicatees. These measures were taken at least in part to fend off a danger that threatened women authors in general and especially actresses, that of being cast as *meretrici oneste* or high-class courtesans. Her husband Giovanni Battista carried on her effort at literary recognition after her death by publishing her letters, while her actor son, Francesco, achieved fame in the character of Capitan Spavento. He continued the creative vein of late 16th-century improvised theater, rejecting Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action and inventing new forms.¹⁷

The context in which Andreini and other professional actors could flourish was the increased involvement of the Venetian patriciate in theatrical, as well as literary, endeavors. Some, such as Alvise Pasqualigo, became authors of pastorals, comedies (the English translation of one of which, *Fedele*, is believed to have inspired several Shakespearean characters, including Falstaff), and letters.¹⁸ Others developed public, paying

¹⁷ Laura Riccò, "Su le carte e fra le scene." *Teatro in forma di libro nel Cinquecento italiano* (Rome, 2008), pp. 285–95.

¹⁸ Adolfo Albertazzi, *Romanzi e romanzieri del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Bologna, 1891), pp. 46–58.

theater in Venice in the last two decades of the century, after nearly a century of improvised public and semi-public venues and various systems of payment; these included theaters built in 1542 and 1565.¹⁹ Two leading Venetian patrician families, the Michiel and the Tron, constructed theaters not far from Rialto to be used for the public performance of comedies in Carnival in about 1580, at the time of a grain crisis and the opening of Andrea Palladio's Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza.²⁰ Both families had had an active role in theater earlier in the century, with the Michiel having members in at least two Compagnie della Calza and Luca Tron one of the government officials leading the way to Ruzante's 1525 rehearsal. The Venetian Republic, the only peninsular state to maintain even a limited form of shared governance and, without imperial connections, having a greater reliance on the loyalty of the popular classes, took the same turn toward public, paying theater taken by the English, with their Parliamentary tradition, at about the same time. The Michiel and Pasqualigo were among the Venetian families with strong commercial ties to England.²¹ However, Jesuits succeeded in convincing the government to impose restrictions on theatrical productions in 1581, and within a few years performances had ceased.

Il Seicento

Political Assertiveness Renewed Then Dampened

By the late 16th century, the Republic seemed to have overcome some of the challenges facing it. Victory at the Battle of Lepanto (1571) put a check on threats from the Ottoman Empire and boosted Venice's military reputation. Galileo Galilei's improved telescope offered (an unfortunately illusory) hope of a return to navigational superiority, while opening a new world of celestial observation. Various developments in the production and finishing of silk, including its cultivation in the mainland state, provided a significant source of commerce.²²

¹⁹ Riccò, "Su le carte," p. 159

²⁰ Siro Ferroni, "La vendita del teatro: Tipologie europee tra cinque e seicento," in Christopher Cairns, ed., *The Commedia dell'Arte from the Renaissance to Dario Fo* (Lewiston, 1989), pp. 35–72; Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), p. 130.

²¹ Carroll, "Venetian Attitudes."

²² Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2000).

Against this backdrop, Venice acted more assertively in several conflicts with the Church. Venetian publishers objected when Rome decided to remove permission for the printing of religious texts in Venice, which, reformist works and university texts having already moved away from Venice, were among the few lucrative genres left to it. The Republic assumed control of censorship. The tension between the two states led to a rupture formalized by Rome with an interdict in 1605 and by Venice with measures including the exclusion of Jesuits from its territory in 1606. The theater ban was lifted the following year.²³ Venice's actions were justified in a critique of the papacy articulated by Fra Paolo Sarpi in his history of the Council of Trent, which characterized the papacy as self-serving and detached from the genuine purpose of religion and care of the faithful. Too inflammatory to be published even in Venice, it was taken to England by sympathizers for publication there, where it became an important text in the growth of free thinking and broader distribution of governing power. Venice's moment of assertiveness, however, ended without the Republic having regained real sovereign powers from the Church, such as the naming of bishops or dominion of the Adriatic, lost to the papacy during the Cambrai wars. It was accompanied by a sharp drop in Venetian commercial activities and followed by a series of military victories of the papacy and Spain that left Venice increasingly condemned to an isolation unrelieved by its allies, even James I of England.

Literature, Melodrama, and Publishing

Venetian writing of the early 17th century was deeply affected by the political situation, as has been shown by the scholarly studies that it has only recently attracted. As verifiable fact and observation assumed dominance in new learned forms developed by Galileo and Sarpi, and also in the innovative form of the gazette, authors of literary and theatrical texts turned increasingly to imagination and emotion in such genres as the romance and melodrama. The first decades of the century saw only a few translated romances published in Venice. Gian Francesco Biondi reversed the trend, but from his new home in London, whence he sent his work, inspired by the English romance, to Venice to be published.

²³ Gaetano Cozzi, *Venezia barocca: conflitti di uomini e idee nella crisi del Seicento veneziano* (Venice, 1995), esp. pp. 265, 273–78; Grendler, "Roman," pp. 54–57, 63–65; Pesenti, "Stampatori," in *SCV* 4.1, pp. 104–15; Muir, *Culture Wars*, esp. p. 124.

As Ginetta Auzzas has noted, the romance is associated with the court, which Venice lacked. The patrician Gian Francesco Loredan, however, filled the gap by founding the Accademia degli Incogniti [Academy of the Anonymous; founded 1630], which he hosted in his home and opened to a wide variety of members. In Auzzas's view, Venice's cultural and intellectual impoverishment had left entertainment literature as one of the few instruments by which to gain power, a situation that was exploited by Loredan. For Auzzas, he was a "cynical and shameless egotist" in search solely of "wealth and worldly success" who indulged the contemporary taste for the marvelous and even sensational in order to achieve the pinnacle of social power, instead of building a new culture based on the expanding of intellectual horizons by figures such as Galileo and Sarpi.²⁴ From a slightly different perspective, with the losses first inflicted in the early 16th century becoming permanent, patricians now appropriated the freedom to voice extreme opinions that they had earlier accorded invited outsiders such as Ruzante. The difference was that Ruzante was proposing a program for a new society that would recognize the dignity and self-determination of all, whereas patricians such as Loredan aimed to reinforce the privileged status of the patriciate.

Loredan began his ascent with his *Scherzi geniali* [Clever Jokes, 1632], which outsold even the works of the most popular writer of the day, his cultural model the Neapolitan poet Giambattista Marino. Loredan's romance *Dianea* (1635), in the "heroic galant" strain, allowed Venetian patricians the illusion that they still occupied an important place in the world. For about the next quarter century, writers resident in Venice and its mainland cities, many of them associated with the Incogniti, produced numerous romances published in Venice. Perhaps most notorious among them was the libertine Ferrante Pallavicino, who became Loredan's secretary. Romances written outside the Republic and translations of various European romances were also published there, such that approximately half of the Italian production occurred in Venice. Venetian romances also began to be translated into major European languages.²⁵

As the "heroic galant" style and its influence on real life came to be criticized as corrupting, Loredan developed new, moralizing romances based on lives of saints and heroic deeds of Venetians.²⁶ His scriptural

²⁴ Ginetta Auzzas, "Le nuove esperienze nella narrativa: il romanzo," in *SCV* 4.1 (1983): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Seicento*, pp. 259.

²⁵ Albertazzi, *Romanzi e romanzieri*, 159–64, 187–220, 236–37; Auzzas, "Nuove."

²⁶ Albertazzi, *Romanzi e romanzieri*, pp. 171–82.

romance *L'Adamo* [*The Life of Adam*, 1640], attributing Adam's betrayal of an omnipotent God to the irresistibility of female beauty, enjoyed a vast success augmented by numerous translations. It has even been considered a possible inspiration for Milton's *Paradise Lost*, as were various other versions of this popular tale, including Giovanni Battista Andreini's *Adamo* (1613).²⁷

The Incogniti were also among the most active promoters of and participants in the development of melodrama, which achieved its pinnacle with the 1643–44 staging of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* [*The Coronation of Poppea*]. Edward Muir considers this their signal achievement, which, in an analysis very different from Auzzas's, he links to the unusual openness of thought in Venice during the time of the Jesuits' banishment, as well as to opera's role in diplomacy and its value as entertainment.²⁸ The success of opera came, again, in the context of Venetian patrician investment in paid public entertainment: the Vendramin family had the Teatro San Luca built early in the century, the Giustinian the Teatro San Moisè in 1620, and the Grimani the Teatro S. Zanipolo, which provided the venue for the landmark *Incoronazione*.²⁹ It is noteworthy that the familial associations with theater of all of these leaders stretch back a century or more, including with Ruzante. Loredan's ancestors, for example, with one exception belonged to families with at least one member in the Immortali [Immortals] or the Ortolani, while the Giustinian and the Grimani were the backbones of the Ortolani. Loredan's wife belonged to the Valier family, which had provided a female protagonist, and perhaps the author, to the *Veniexiana*.³⁰

Women's intellectual endeavors were both favored and opposed by members of the Incogniti. They promoted the emotional female voice in melodrama and allowed women into the Accademia, though only if masked. While the writerly nun Arcangela Tarabotti received the

²⁷ Roy C. Flanagan with John Arthos, "Introduction," in Gian Francesco Loredan, *The Life of Adam* (1640) (Gainesville, Fla., 1967), pp. iii–xxi; William Hayley, *The Life of Milton*, 2nd ed. (1796; Gainesville, Fla., 1970), pp. 233–80.

²⁸ Muir, *Culture Wars*, esp. pp. 111–48.

²⁹ Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley, 1991), esp. pp. 79–81; Beth L. Glixon and Jonathan E. Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-century Venice* (Oxford, 2006), esp. parts 1 and 4.

³⁰ Archivio di Stato, Venice, Miscellanea Codici I, Storia Veneta 17, Marco Barbaro, and A. M. Tasca, *Arbori dei patritii veneti*, vol. 4, pp. 329–30; Carroll, "Venetian Attitudes"; Giorgio Padoan, "Introduzione," in Giorgio Padoan, ed., *La Veniexiana: commedia anonima di veneziano del Cinquecento* (Padua, 1974), pp. 16–18.

patronage of Loredan for many works, this was not the case of her treatise harshly criticizing fathers for forcing their daughters into convents for the father's financial gain. Loredan, who himself benefitted personally from the system, defended the patriciate against her attack and was probably instrumental in preventing it from seeing print.³¹ The Incogniti were also associated with various literary works of misogyny, one of which was among the causes of an Inquisition case brought against the Accademia's printer.³²

A second and deeper shock was sent to the Incogniti by the 1644 ecclesiastical trial of Pallavicino for his anticlerical works, which resulted in his execution. However, the contemporary taste for the curious and even bizarre was slow to die, and again the Incogniti moved to satisfy it with the *Cento novelle amoroze* [*One Hundred Tales of Love*; 1651], authored by various members under Loredan's direction. By 1657, the Venetian government, as during the Wars of the League of Cambrai involved in an expensive war that required papal assistance, allowed the Jesuits to return. Loredan's fortunes suffered a disastrous reversal; after his death in 1661, the Incogniti ceased literary production.

By the mid-17th century, romances had definitively shed their risqué characteristics and provided examples of prudence and virtue. The first-person tendency of the narration became serious, with the main characters in heroic romances no longer representing the upper classes but the authors themselves, a development preparing the way for the move toward the centrality of the common person in the 18th century. However, romances also incorporated highly emotional elements of the Greek tradition such as shipwrecks, pirates, false accusations, unexpected separations and reunions; the passion of the lovers, if chaste, was high. Another important trend of the latter Seicento consisted of the incorporation of instruction and even critiques of historical rulers into works praising princes.³³

In 1678, Elena Cornaro Piscopia became the first woman in the world to receive a university degree, in mathematics from the University of Padua. Illegitimate at her birth, she was the daughter of a peasant mother and a

³¹ Letizia Panizza, "Introduzione," in Letizia Panizza, ed. and trans., *Arcangela Tarabotti, Paternal Tyranny* (Chicago, 2004), pp. 1–31; Muir, *Culture Wars*, pp. 102–06.

³² Clizia Carminati, "Loredan, Gian Francesco," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 65 (2005), pp. 765–66.

³³ For various points in this paragraph, see Albertazzi, *Romanzi e romanzieri*, pp. 156–58, 335–36.

father belonging to one of the most illustrious families of the patriciate, a family for whom Ruzante had written at least two works. Her academic career was chosen by her father as the means by which to repair the family reputation.³⁴

Il Settecento

Early Development of Realism

A move toward sobriety and order characterized much of the literature and theater of the early 18th century, reinforced by the wave of patriotic spirit generated by French aggression toward Italian states. A revival of Arcadia emphasized restraint and the use of Latin models while proclaiming Catholic orthodoxy. An interest in documented historical fact and everyday life was growing, epitomized by the work of Ludovico Antonio Muratori, who published volumes of historical documents and favored realistic characters from various walks of life for comic theater. In 1744, the printshop of the seminary of Padua published Galileo's complete works.³⁵ While Venice retained an important role in the publishing industry through much of the century, censorship increased, resulting in many books having false or no publication data.³⁶

The strict application of Aristotelian rules to tragedy had by then alienated the theater-going public, as had the excessive emotionalism of melodrama, while the *Commedia dell'Arte* had exhausted its inventiveness. French tragedy and Molière's comedy filled the void, Italian audiences attracted by their greater naturalism. Luigi Riccoboni, of Venetian origin, undertook the reform of the Italian theater with the staging of tragedies characterized by a more realistic style and more edifying values. The genre was developed further by Riccoboni's patron Scipione Maffei of Verona in his *Merope and Flaminia*, with the encouragement of Apostolo Zeno. One of the most important literary and theatrical figures of the period, Zeno collected theatrical texts including the great miscellany Marciana ital. XI,

³⁴ Francesco Ludovico Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1646–1684): The First Woman in the World to Earn a University Degree*, ed. Catherine Marshall, trans. Jan Vairo and William Crochetiere (Philadelphia, 2007).

³⁵ Dante Nardo, "Gli studi classici," in SCV 5.1 (1985): *Dalla Controriforma alla fine della Repubblica. Il Settecento*, pp. 227–56.

³⁶ Giuseppe Ortolani, "Appunti per la storia della riforma del teatro nel '700," in Gino Damerini, ed., *La riforma del teatro nel Settecento, e altri scritti* (Venice, 1962), pp. 3–37, for Muratori p. 5; Giorgio Pullini, "Il teatro fra polemica e costume," in SCV 5.1, pp. 277–307.

66. Having begun his reform with melodrama, Zeno founded *Il Giornale dei letterati d'Italia* [*The Journal of Italian Men of Letters*] in 1696 together with Maffei. A group of young intellectuals formed around the enterprise that included future journalist Gasparo Gozzi. The new publication built on Venice's history as a center of the publication of the *gazzetta* [daily events] and the *giornale* [intellectual topics] since the middle of the 17th century.³⁷ *Il Giornale* would continue publication at irregular intervals and with various directors and collaborators until 1740, taking advantage of the wide range of learned individuals of peninsular and international scope residing in Venice and Padua.

Goldoni's Reform: An Overview

In 1734, one of the most significant events in the history of Venetian theater and literature occurred when Carlo Goldoni became associated with the Imer troupe and the Grimani theater of San Samuele. Inspired by Molière, he began writing his own pieces, at first *intermezzi* or interact entertainment. As Franco Fido has noted, the unreal, Arcadian world of the *intermezzo* and the opera *libretto* enjoyed a wider creative and moral latitude than that of plays. Goldoni took full advantage of these features over the long course of his career, with con artist and libertine characters, satires of noble pretense and "a naturalistic and egalitarian message."³⁸ Fido has pointed to this area of Goldoni's production as offering a promising field for future research.

Also facilitating the expression of such popular values were the *com-media ridicolosa* tradition and the higher proportion of the popular classes among the audiences of musical pieces. Goldoni included especially in his musical works episodes of peasant life and customs similar to those found in Ruzante.³⁹ In particular, the works that combine poetic Arcadian shepherds with real peasants, such as *Uccellatori* [*The Bird Hunters*], seem to continue a tradition evident in Ruzante's *Pastoral*, possibly a private entertainment genre. He also borrowed other features of 16th-century comedies: the characters Lena and Ghitta of *Amor contadino*

³⁷ Marco Cerruti, "L'erudizione storico-letteraria," in *SCV* 5.1, pp. 257–75.

³⁸ Franco Fido, "Carlo Goldoni," in Nino Borsellino and Walter Pedullà, eds., *Il secolo riformatore. Poesia e ragione nel Settecento*, vol. 7 of *Storia generale della letteratura italiana* (Milan, 1999), pp. 597–601, p. 599.

³⁹ Compare, for example, the peasant wedding ceremony of *Amor contadino*, III. 10 with Ruzante, *Betia*, V. 1; with Goldoni's access to the Grimani palace of S. Maria Formosa, he could have seen the play in manuscript form.

[*Peasant Love*] have names recalling those of Ariosto's *Lena* and Ghetta of Ruzante's *Piovana* [*The Girl from Piove*]. In a telling development, however, the social values expressed in the plot lines of Goldoni's works are considerably more daring than even those of Ruzante. In *Uccellatori*, for example, a titled noblewoman not only becomes enamoured of a peasant but is even disposed to marry him; it is he who rejects her.

In these first *intermezzi* (e.g., *La birba*, *The Con*; 1734) Goldoni initiated his reform of the theater, which furthered the interpenetration of the street and the stage that had developed over the preceding century and the growing preference for authored over improvised works.⁴⁰ His reform took theater from the vulgar slapstick improvisations of *Commedia dell'Arte* and the excessive and even gruesome emotionalism of melodrama and tragedy to a meditation upon the real world. In particular, Goldoni sought to penetrate the veil of rhetoric and dissimulation to discern and communicate in plain language the truth of everyday events and actions. His emphasis on real-life language manifested itself especially in his many plays in the Venetian language.

Summarizing his theories for the 1750 edition of his plays, Goldoni termed his reform "Mondo e Teatro" [World and Theater].⁴¹ Some of the aspects of daily life informing his plays are the frantic search for income, with the bourgeoisie the only class still involved in what remained of Venice's shrinking commercial economy; the growing economic power of women deriving from their dowries and money-making capacity and the extreme limits on reproduction that could leave only daughters sole heirs; the increasing dependence of the upper class on the lower class. The important influence of international culture is also reflected in Goldoni's privileging of French and especially of British rationalist culture, continuing the fruitful tradition of intellectual and cultural exchange that merits further attention from scholars.

As Franco Fido has noted, Venice provided the perfect setting for Goldoni's reform with its unique topography putting members of all classes in close proximity to one another, a long literary and official use of the Venetian language, and an emphasis on the spoken word and dialogue appearing even in Gasparo Gozzi's newspapers.⁴² The merging of theater

⁴⁰ Pullini, "Il teatro fra polemica e costume," p. 279; Franco Fido, "Carlo Goldoni," in *SCV* 5.1, p. 312.

⁴¹ See especially Ortolani, "Appunti"; Mario Baratto, "Goldoni," in *Tre studi sul teatro* (Vicenza, 1964), pp. 157–227, esp. pp. 192–93.

⁴² Fido, "Carlo Goldoni," in *SCV* 5.1, pp. 309–10.

and life in Venice, where people went about masked on the street for a significant part of the year and the *Commedia dell'Arte* uniquely remained a human rather than a puppet theater, where vacation time was whiled away in amateur theatrical productions, and where people of all social classes went to the theater, made the application of behavioral models proposed in theaters all the more tempting.⁴³ Moreover, as the Republic's far-flung empire and commerce declined, it increasingly recognized the importance of its local non-patrician population and the advantages to consolidating its loyalty with the governing patrician class.

Goldoni's Early Theatrical Career

Goldoni's first works with fully written parts were *Momolo cortesan* [*Momolo the Courtier*] and *Momolo sulla Brenta* [*Momolo on the Brenta*; 1738], based on the new character type that he created of the young Venetian man enjoying a last moment of fun before assuming business and marital responsibilities. The first work to completely embody his reform was the prophetic *Donna di garbo* [*The Well-mannered Woman*; 1743], whose published form he would dedicate to a Venetian woman patrician. Its young laundress Rosaura utilizes both the learning she has gleaned from her work in a *collegio* and her beauty to avenge herself on a faithless student suitor and men in general by conquering them completely through besting them at the legal profession and captivating their hearts. *Donna* already manifests the well structured and swiftly moving action, the protagonism of female and working-class characters, and the balanced portrayal of good and bad in all characters that will mark Goldoni's best plays. The conclusion barely affirms traditional values through Rosaura's choice of the family patriarch, rather than the student, as her marriage partner.

Away from Venice from 1743 to 1748, Goldoni returned to take over the Sant'Angelo theater with Girolamo Medebach after its failure under Gasparo Gozzi and his wife, the Arcadian poetess Luisa Bergalli. Shortly after his arrival, Goldoni faced his first serious rival, the abbot Pietro Chiari, who, following on the success of Goldoni's *La vedova scaltra* [*The Sly Widow*; 1748], created *La scuola delle vedove* [*The School for Widows*; 1749]. Both plays centered upon the freedom enjoyed by Venetian widows, who, unlike widows in some other Italian states, assumed control of their

⁴³ Pullini, "Il teatro fra polemica e costume," pp. 279–81.

dowries after their husband's death. The theme's appeal was presumably enhanced by the increase of women in the audience resulting from the weakening of the traditional limitation of their theatrical attendance to convent productions. Goldoni was so incensed by Chiari's close imitation that he appealed to the State Inquisitors, who closed down both plays. At the end of that season, after Goldoni's stilted and conventional *Erede fortunata* [*The Fortunate Heiress*] had flopped, he vowed to create double the number of plays in the following one.

Goldoni's Reform Takes Shape

The 16 comedies of the 1750–51 season, while not all noteworthy, included the *Bottega del caffè* [*The Coffee Shop*] and *Pamela* (inspired by the Samuel Richardson work and the first work to be staged without masks). In 1750 Goldoni also undertook the publication of his works, prefaced by his explication of his reform. Until 1753 he remained at the Sant'Angelo, whose relatively small scale promoted an air of intimacy. While there he fully developed his reform on the principles of variation, expressiveness, and a moral template based on real life.⁴⁴ One of his last works for the Sant'Angelo was *La locandiera* [*The Mistress of the Inn*]. Its young protagonist, heir to an inn and free of senior male relatives with authority over her life, succeeds in making three noblemen fall in love with her. When their rivalry turns threatening, she bases her choice of husband on retaining maximum freedom, the successful candidate an employee of hers also recommended by her late father. In 1753, Goldoni became embroiled in a dispute with Medebach over the royalties of the published plays, to which Goldoni asserted his rights as the author of texts different from those put on the stage. An offer of more money from the Vendramin and the prestige of their theater took Goldoni to the San Luca, where he would remain until 1762.

In an attempt to retain its public, the Sant'Angelo immediately hired Chiari, who incorporated into the realism and localism borrowed from Goldoni an array of other features appealing to conservative tastes among Venetian theatergoers. These included the kind of exoticism, fantasy, and high drama lingering from the 17th-century novel and melodrama and continued in tragedy, as well as the structures and language of Latin models and the Aristotelian unities. Such literary values accompanied social

⁴⁴ Pullini, "Il teatro fra polemica e costume," pp. 304–06.

values assuming the superiority of the ruling class.⁴⁵ Prodded by his rival's success and fearful of losing his audience, Goldoni included exotic locales and characters in some plays.

Yet Goldoni continued his reform in the realistic comedies of this period. They embody some of his greatest dramatic accomplishments, especially the probing of the complex entwining of positive and negative features in aspects of human conduct. While continuing the strategy of paired characters representing the two sides of a feature, e.g., the studious brother Florindo versus the gambler brother Lelio of *Il padre di famiglia* [*The Father of the Family*] of 1750, he moved toward the internalization of the conflict. The first signs of this development appear early, in his female characters who both daringly initiate their suitors' rivalry and then, realizing the risks of continuing it and various advantages to ending it, settle upon one of them (*La donna di garbo*, *La vedova scaltra*, *La locandiera*). His male characters achieve such complexity only in this period. They include the Cavaliere of *Il campiello* [*The Courtyard*; 1756], who is no longer an arrogant cardboard figure but recognizes that he is in love and yields to his feelings, and the Conte dell'Isola of *L'amante di se medesimo* [*The Man in Love with Himself*; 1756], who recognizes his needs for both freedom and connectedness. These figures also reflect a greater humanization of the aristocracy that came in this period with their increased patronage of and intimacy with Goldoni. In this period too the controlling female figures such as *L'amante's* Marchesa Ippolita and Campiello's Gasparina also recognize powerful feelings of love rather than single-mindedly pursuing their own interests.

Goldoni's Final Years in Venice, Carlo Gozzi, Gasparo Gozzi

Toward the end of the 1750s, a second rival to Goldoni emerged: Carlo Gozzi, who positioned himself as the perpetuator of traditional Venetian theater and the defender of its patrician social structure and moral code, especially regarding women. Their morals, it was feared, would be corrupted by plays depicting female freedom of action. His works both repropounded the Commedia dell'Arte's *L'amore delle tre melarance* [*The Love of the Three Bitter Oranges*] of 1761 parodying both Chiari and Goldoni and emphasized exotic locales and absolute rulers.

⁴⁵ Laura Riccò, "Parrebbe un romanzo": polemiche editoriali e linguaggi teatrali ai tempi di Goldoni, Chiari, Gozzi (Rome, 2000); Roberta Turchi, "Il teatro del secondo Settecento," in Borsellino and Pedullà, eds., *Il secolo riformatore*, pp. 626–27.

In a manifestation of how divided public opinion was between realism and fantasy, the *Gazzetta Veneta*, produced by Carlo's older brother Gasparo, reviewed favorably Goldoni's *I rusteghi* [*Cranky Old Men*; 1760], which deals with the bourgeoisie. The elder Gozzi's emphasis on realism would also give life to two other gazettes, the *Mondo morale* [*Moral World*] and the *Osservatore Veneto* [*The Veneto Observer*], from 1761 to 1762. Unlike the periodical publications of Milan that dedicated much space to international political news, Gozzi's dealt with local daily events that often resembled the plots of plays, their approach remaining superficial.⁴⁶

Goldoni's brilliant 1761–62 season, which included the *Villeggiatura* [*Country Vacation*] trilogy, *Sior Todaro Brontolon* [*Mr. Ted the Grouch*], *Baruffe ciozote* [*Chioggian Brawls*], and *Una delle ultime sere di Carnevale* [*One of the Last Evenings of Carnival*], was insufficient to stave off mounting criticism. Patrician resentment of the importance of the popular classes in his plays was fanned by Carlo Gozzi's criticism that he lacked culture and elegance and that his plays would precipitate a decline in public morals, among other things inciting the popular classes to prey upon the patriciate. Though still under contract to the San Luca, Goldoni departed for Paris in 1762. He sent a few plays that Vendramin staged and wrote a few plays in French, most notably *L'éventail* (1763) rewritten as *Il ventaglio* [*The Fan*; 1765] and *Bourru bienfaisant* [*The Kindly Curmudgeon*; 1771]. However, his creative vein was stifled by the French preference for the Commedia dell'Arte that he had rejected. The chief fruit of his time in Paris was his memoir.

Literature, Theater and Publishing in the Final Years of the Republic

Pietro Chiari left Venice in the same year as Goldoni. The less popular Carlo Gozzi continued his nostalgic tales of exotic and hierarchical empires and kingdoms where magic reigned, although within a decade or so of Goldoni's departure the old-line theatrical productions had ceased.

The realistic strain in Venetian culture was maintained by journalists, including Luisa Bergalli and Elisabetta Caminer Turra, who continued her father's *Europa letteraria* [*Literary Europe*] and founded her own *Giornale*

⁴⁶ Pullini, "Il teatro fra polemica e costume," p. 281; Guido Santato, "Cultura e letteratura dell'Illuminismo," in Borsellino and Pedullà, eds., *Il secolo riformatore*, pp. 406–09; and see, for example, the episode of the seamstress's faked dowry at the date of 13 February, 1760 in Gasparo Gozzi, *La "Gazzetta Veneta" per la prima volta riprodotta nella sua letteraria integrità*, ed. Antonio Zardo (Florence, 1915), pp. 14–15.

enciclopedico [*Encyclopedic Newspaper*]. Both women were also prolific translators of European literary and theatrical works.⁴⁷

Parallel to Goldoni's career ran that of Giacomo Casanova, who even played in the orchestra at the staging of one of Goldoni's plays. His mother and her husband (possibly not Casanova's father) both actors, Casanova lived and wrote his life almost as a string of theatrical episodes,⁴⁸ like an actor creating a persona out of the affirmation of others and giving full voice to the strain of Venetian libertinism initiated by Pietro Aretino and developed by Gian Francesco Loredan and his clients.

The Republic itself was snuffed out in 1797 by Napoleon, shortly after a delegation sent by the fledgling United States with the goal of developing a trade agreement had concluded that there was insufficient reason.⁴⁹

The success of Venetian literature and publishing is connected with an enduring eclecticism that developed in a port city poised between East and West, whose markets it grew wealthy satisfying, and was deepened in the Republic's international university in Padua. This aesthetic advantage was augmented by the prudence of the Venetian government in allowing a broad range of views to be published and in providing financial protection to publishers through the *privilegio*. As a result, works written and printed in Venice provided something for every taste: realistic and fantastic, patriotic and popular, local and exotic, serious and comic, religious and erotic, virtuous and vice-laden, passionate and chaste, idealizing and pragmatic, conservative and innovative, patriarchal and feminist, rebellious and traditional, outrageous and uplifting, egalitarian and hierarchical. Such a broad range provided the additional advantage of permitting immediate adaptation to changing trends. Venetian literature and publishing thus for centuries enjoyed unusual success by initiating or assuming leadership in many aesthetic and intellectual trends and at times even in socio-political ones. The resulting body of work made a crucial contribution to Western thought and culture.

⁴⁷ Turchi, "Il teatro del secondo Settecento," pp. 648–49; Santato, "Cultura e letteratura dell'Illuminismo," p. 409.

⁴⁸ Pullini, "Il teatro fra polemica e costume," p. 280.

⁴⁹ Piero Del Negro and Federica Ambrosini, *L'Aquila e il Leone: i contatti diplomatici per un accordo commerciale fra gli Stati Uniti d'America e la Repubblica di Venezia* (Padua, 1989).

Bibliographical Essay

An extensive, expert, and indispensable guide to the history of Venetian culture is the *Storia della Cultura Veneta* (hereafter SCV with volume and part numbers separated by a period) published over a number of years by Neri Pozza of Vicenza. Gianfranco Folena decided the plan of the work, which is divided into volumes by historical period; volumes are subdivided into tomes by historical period and/or by the distinction between cultural matters, such as literature and music, and historical and scientific matters. The editors for all of the volumes cited in the present essay were Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi. The authors of the articles have produced major works of scholarship that should be consulted by those seeking additional information on topics of interest.

The 15th Century

Dal Primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento [From the Early Fifteenth Century to the Council of Trent] (1980), SCV 3.1, contains the following articles important to the present essay: Armando Balduino, "Le esperienze della poesia volgare," pp. 265–367; Marisa Milani, "Le origini della poesia pavana e l'immagine della cultura e della vita contadina," pp. 369–412; and Ivano Paccagnella, "Origini padovane del macaronico: Corado e Tifi," pp. 413–29. Important works on Venetian publishing are Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaca, 1979); Tiziana Plebani, *Venezia 1469. La legge e la stampa* (Venice, 2004); and Vittore Branca and Giorgio Padoan, eds., *Boccaccio, Venezia e il Veneto* (Florence, 1979).

The 16th Century

Numerous essays of SCV 3.2 provide orientation on the issues considered here, including: Giancarlo Mazzacurati, "Pietro Bembo," pp. 1–59; Giovanni Aquilecchia, "Pietro Aretino e altri poligrafi a Venezia," pp. 61–98; Ginetta Auzzas, "La narrativa nella prima metà del Cinquecento," pp. 99–138; Piero Floriani, "Grammatici e teorici della letteratura volgare," pp. 139–81; Manlio Cortelazzo, "Esperienze ed esperimenti plurilinguistici," 183–213; Neri Pozza, "L'editoria veneziana da Giovanni da Spira ad Aldo Manuzio. I centri editoriali di terraferma," pp. 215–44; John R. Hale, "Industria del libro e cultura militare a Venezia nel Rinascimento," pp. 245–88. The scholarship on early 16th-century literature, theater, and publishing in Venice is vast; it is possible to give only some of most relevant works here.

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The 17th Century

SCV 4.1, titled simply *Il Seicento* [*The Seventeenth Century*], offers a variety of riches on the little-studied literature and publishing of this period. The essays include Tiziana Pesenti, "Stampatori e letterati nell'industria editoriale a Venezia e in terraferma," pp. 93–129; Gino Benzoni, "Le accademie," pp. 131–62; Maria Luisa Doglio, "La letteratura ufficiale e l'oratoria celebrativa," pp. 163–87; Francesco Ersparmer, "Petrarchismo e manierismo nella lirica del second Cinquecento," pp. 189–222; Guido Baldassari, "'Acutezza' e 'ingegno': teoria e pratica del gusto barocco," pp. 223–47; Ginetta Auzzas, "Le nuove esperienze nella narrativa: il romanzo," pp. 249–95; Nicola Mangini, "La tragedia e la commedia," pp. 297–326; Fernando Bandini, "La letteratura pavana dopo il Ruzante: tra manierismo e barocco," pp. 327–62; Manlio Cortelazzo, "Uso, vitalità, e espansione del dialetto," pp. 363–79; Elena Povoledo, "I comici professionisti e la

Commedia dell'Arte: caratteri, tecniche, fortuna," pp. 381–408; and Anna Laura Bellina and Thomas Walker, "Il melodramma: poesia e musica nell'esperienza teatrale," pp. 409–32.

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The works of women writers of the 17th century have recently been studied and published. Numerous of Marinella's works have been published, and she has been studied by Paola Malpezzi Price and Christini Ristaino in *Lucrezia Marinella and the "Querelle des Femmes" in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Madison, N.J., 2008). A play, poetry, and letters of Isabella Andreini have been published. Modesta Pozzo's treatise on women and a chivalric romance have been published, the latter edited by Valeria Finucci. Arcangela Tarabotti's treatise on paternal tyranny has been fully published, as have two studies of her. The extraordinary career of Elena Cornaro Piscopia has been researched in great detail by Francesco Ludovico Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1646–84): The First Woman in the World to Earn a University Degree*, ed. Catherine Marshall, trans. Jan Vairo and William Crochetiere (Philadelphia, 2007).

The 18th Century

Modern scholarship on Goldoni began with the meticulous work of Giuseppe Ortolani, which appears in his introductions and notes to the plays in the Mondadori edition and in a wide range of articles, the most important of which are collected in Gino Damerini, ed., *La riforma del teatro nel Settecento, e altri scritti* (Venice, 1962). The volume also contains essays on Goldoni's warm reception in various countries. Mario Baratto's research is foundational; beyond the essay "Goldoni," in *Tre studi*, he wrote

numerous essays, the chief of which are collected in *La letteratura teatrale del Settecento in Italia: studi e letture su Carlo Goldoni* (Vicenza, 1985). Franca Angelini, *Vita di Goldoni* (Rome, 1993) provides a lively account of his life. The major current interpreter of Goldoni is Franco Fido. Among his most important studies are *Guida a Goldoni: teatro e società nel Settecento* (Turin, 1977); *Da Venezia all'Europa: prospettive sull'ultimo Goldoni* (Rome, 1984); and *Nuova guida a Goldoni: teatro e società nel Settecento* (Turin, 2001). An excellent start on the intriguing topic of the reciprocal influence of Goldoni and England is Jackson I. Cope, "Goldoni's England and England's Goldoni," *MLN*, 110.1 (1995), 101–31. Carlo Gozzi's most popular tales are translated as *Five Tales for the Theatre*, ed. and trans. Albert Bermel and Ted Emery (Chicago, 1989). Venice's women intellectuals of the 18th century have received attention of late. See, for example, Adrienne Ward, "The Price of Sonnets and Bonnets: How Gender Works in Luisa Bergalli's *Le avventure del poeta*," *Italica* 79 (2002), 168–88; Catherine M. Sama, "Liberty, Equality, Frivolity: An Italian Critique of Fashion Periodicals," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 37 (2004), 389–414. Catherine M. Sama has edited and translated Elisabetta Caminer Turra, *Selected writings of an 18th-century Venetian Woman of Letters* (Chicago, 2003).

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BOOK PUBLISHING AND THE CIRCULATION OF INFORMATION

Mario Infelise

The Cosmopolitan City

According to Aldo Manuzio, one of the most ingenious publishers in history, Venice in 1498 was “a place more like an entire world than a city.”¹ The city he had chosen only a few years earlier to be the center of his publishing activity was then at the height of its wealth and power and could boast the most efficient publishing industry in all of Europe, with dozens of booksellers and printers engaged in a voluminous production. Based on surviving *incunables* catalogues, the volumes printed in Italy accounted for between 35 and 41 per cent of the total of all printed works at the time, and the Venetians alone contributed 40 per cent of the Italian share. At the time, no other European city enjoyed a comparable production capacity.²

Yet Venice had not been among the first European cities to introduce the printing press. The first German printers to venture into Italy had settled in destinations already recognized as centers of manuscript production, perhaps thinking of the printed book as an object altogether similar to the handwritten version. Arnolf Pannartz and Konrad Sweynheim had thus tried their fortunes in the Benedictine monastery of Subiaco in 1461, and shortly thereafter in Rome. But a printing press was not a *scriptorium*, and the printed book, though it may have born the same text as a manuscript, was proving to be a product of a very different sort. A printshop needed to be connected to a precise economic and cultural context of the sort that soon became clear. It was not until 1469 with the arrival of John of Speyer, likely invited by a group of Venetian patricians of humanist background, that the publishing industry could truly take off in the lagoon. The necessary preconditions for its success, however, were already in place: a financial system with accessible credit, insurance companies

¹ Aldo Manuzio described Venice thus in dedicating to Marin Sanudo the 1498 edition of the works of Angelo Poliziano.

² For bibliographical statistics, see Neil Harris, “Ombre della storia del libro italiano,” in L. Pon and C. Kallendorf, eds., *The Book of Venice. Il libro veneziano* (Venezia/New Castle, Del., 2008), pp. 454–516.

able and willing to guarantee risky transactions, ease and frequency of transport and connections to all of Europe and the Mediterranean, and a dynamic and literate local clientele. These circumstances permitted the enduring success of the Venetian book.

Despite the long tradition of studies dedicated to the Venetian publishing industry, with the exception of Horatio F. Brown's 1891 *The Venetian Printing Press* (London, 1891), a good general account of the topic is still wanting. Indeed, the abundance of documentation conserved in the Venetian archives and libraries and the multiplicity of possible analytical trajectories have long impeded a synthetic treatment of this story of undoubted importance. To this it must be added that scholarly interest for the topic in the 19th and 20th centuries was only intermittent. The last decades of the 19th century saw a particular blossoming of studies of the 15th and 16th centuries. It was part of a renewed interest in re-evaluating the history of the Venetian Republic and founded on the twin pillars of archival research and the publication of particularly important sources, and many were the scholars who took particular interest in the golden age of the Venetian book. It was the period of the great printed collections of the documents conserved in the archives of the Frari, such as those of Fulin, which grouped together the most important official documents regarding Venetian publishing up to 1526.³ There were also attempts at synthesis, such as Brown's above-mentioned volume, which also gave significant attention to the search for and publication of original sources. Also of note were the great research projects dedicated to the production of single publishers, like that of Salvatore Bongi on the *Annali* of the Giolito,⁴ or studies of particular aspects of the book trade, such as the prince of Essling's early 20th-century monumental work on illustrated editions.⁵

In general, the late 19th century was a period of extraordinary vitality for studies of the Italian book, a dynamism destined to wane significantly in the early 1900s. Scholarly interest has picked up again particularly in the last few decades, thanks to a Europe-wide revival of the History of the Book and has followed the paths set by the French historians Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, as well as the suggestions of Anglo-

³ Rinaldo Fulin, "Documenti per la storia della tipografia veneziana," *Archivio veneto* (1881), 84–202, 390–405.

⁴ Salvatore Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito* (Rome, 1890–95).

⁵ Victor Massena Essling [Prince d'], *Les livres à figures vénitiens de la fin du XV siècle et du commencement du XVI* (Florence/Paris, 1907–14).

Saxon analytic studies of the book. The English historian Martin Lowry was among the first of this new wave to make important contributions to the history of Venetian printing between the 15th and 16th centuries with two fundamental works. The first takes on the complex personality of Aldo Manuzio, while the second treats Aldo's 15th-century predecessors, particularly the French printer Nicolas Jenson, active in Venice from 1470, whose story is essential for a proper understanding of the early years of Venetian printing and its establishment in the city.⁶ Though works on Manuzio's *fortuna* were not lacking, Lowry created a particularly vivid picture of Aldo's activity and the complex relationship that developed between the printer and his host city. The importance of Manuzio went far beyond the city of Venice, such that it would not be far-fetched to accredit him as the true inventor of the early modern book. If Gutenberg had invented a technique without concerning himself with its implications and uses, Aldo excogitated and put into practice a series of solutions that marked a decisive rupture with the world of the manuscript, rendering the printed book the most potent communication tool of the last 500 years, in certain ways still unsurpassed by even the most influential technological advancements of recent years. Our debts to Aldo include his attention to the design of textual characters and impagination, the definition of methods of punctuation, and the adoption of smaller formats to make books more manageable and accessible and end the formerly almost-exclusive clerical monopoly of the book. He was also able to combine text and image for the first time in print, and with a surprising aesthetic sensibility, in one of the most beautiful and mysterious editions of all time, the 1499 *Hipnerotomachia Poliphili*.⁷

Yet, as is normally the case, influential innovations do not long remain under the exclusive control of those responsible for them. All of Manuzio's most important contributions were quickly imitated or copied, despite his attempts to protect them. However, it was also by such means that

⁶ Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1979); and Lowry, *Nicholas Jenson and the Rise of Venetian Publishing in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1991).

⁷ The bibliography regarding Aldo is enormous and dates back centuries. His editions garnered him such fame within his own lifetime that his person became a cult figure before the end of the 16th century. It became the custom of book collectors to give special attention to his editions, separating them from the others. Such prestige has guaranteed an interest in his catalogue and biography unequalled among publishers in the 15th and 16th centuries. The first monographs dedicated to him date back to the 18th century. For a first bibliographical study, see Mario Infelise, "Manuzio, Aldo il vecchio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 69 (Rome, 2007), pp. 236–45.

his contribution to the affirmation and spread of the printed book remained decisive.

Even with Aldo's death in 1515, the Venetian book industry did not lose its earlier dynamism. An estimate based on the Italian editions possessed by the British Library calculates that 74 per cent of the books published in Italy between 1526 and 1550 were printed in Venice.⁸ This period witnessed both the creation of new publishing houses and the continued development of existing ones, characterized by an extraordinary vitality despite the different fields in which individual publishers worked. They experimented with new techniques, invented new products, perfected commercial and production systems, and thus contributed to the reinforcement of Venice as a great publishing center. The Giunti constructed a truly international operation centered in Venice, but with multiple economic interests in Europe and along the entire Mediterranean basin; Alessandro Paganino tested new formats and used Arabic letters to print a Koran with which he hoped to penetrate the Ottoman and middle-eastern markets;⁹ Marcolini and Giolito focused predominantly on vernacular literature;¹⁰ Ottaviano Petrucci invented a method for printing polyphonic music; and the Frenchman Antonio Gardano, after having perfected that method, moved to Venice to start a printing house specialized in musical editions.¹¹ Still others tried their hand at printing maps and atlases and in the reproduction of images.¹² The list is lengthy indeed.

⁸ Marino Zorzi, "Dal manoscritto al libro," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 4 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 817–958. On 16th-century production data, however, see Harris, "Ombre della storia del libro italiano," pp. 472–85.

⁹ Angela Nuovo, *Alessandro Paganino (1509–1538)* (Padua, 1990). See also Giorgio Vercellin, *Venezia e l'origine della stampa in caratteri arabi* (Padua, 2001).

¹⁰ See also the works of Amedeo Quondam, "Mercanzia d'onore/Mercanzia d'utile. Produzione libraria e lavoro intellettuale a Venezia nel Cinquecento," in A. Petrucci, *Libri, editori e pubblico nell'Europa moderna* (Rome/Bari, 1977), pp. 51–104; and "Nel giardino del Marcolini. Un editore veneziano tra Aretino e Doni," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 157 (1980), 75–116.

¹¹ On musical editions, see Iain Fenlon, *Music, Print and Culture in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy* (London, 1995). On Gardano, see Elisa Bonaldi, "La famiglia Gardano e l'editoria musicale veneziana (1538–1611)," *Studi veneziani* n.s. 20 (1990), 272–302; and Mary S. Lewis, *Antonio Gardano, Venetian Music Printer, 1538–1569: A Descriptive Bibliography and Historical Study*, 3 vols (New York, 1988, 1997, 2005).

¹² David Woodward, *Maps and Prints in the Italian Renaissance: Makers, Distributors, and Consumers* (London, 1996).

Information and Journalism

While I have focused so far on the novelty of print, we must not forget the endurance of the manuscript in sectors that maintained a notable production even after Gutenberg's invention. It is widely known that Venice, in the very years in which it was becoming one of the most prolific European publishing centers, was also a focal point for the collection, production, and diffusion of political and military news, such that the tool destined to be the principal vehicle for such news in the following centuries, the gazette, is generally attributed Venetian origins.¹³ But the gazettes, or *avvisi*, as these periodical sheets dedicated to news-gathering were commonly called, long remained hand-written, and it was only well into the 17th century that they began to appear in print. Even those responsible for compiling them often had a role in the production of the manuscript. In this sector the advantages of the manuscript with respect to print were beyond doubt, and for two principal reasons: greater production speed and less censorship.¹⁴

This custom of compiling and sending out sheets that collected letter excerpts and news of general interest is documented even in the 15th century.¹⁵ Over the course of the 16th century the demand for these newsletters tended to increase, especially in the bigger cities. In Venice, those who worked in the news industry often operated within small workshops of copiers. They collected the pieces of news and compiled them in a weekly *avviso*. These newsletters were then recopied by hand a certain number of times and sent out by post to their subscribers, who were

¹³ Peter Burke, *Early Modern Venice as a Centre of Information and Communication*, in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297–1797* (Baltimore/London, 2000), pp. 389–419. An original study regarding the multiple implications of communication and information can be found in Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007).

¹⁴ On the organization of the transmission of political information, see my studies: *Prima dei giornali. Alle origini della pubblica informazione (secoli XVI e XVII)* (Rome/Bari, 2002); "From Merchants' Letters to Handwritten Political *Avvisi*: Notes on the Origins of Public Information," in Robert Muchembled and E. William Monter, *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 3: *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe 1400–1700*, ed. F. Bethencourt and F. Egmond (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 33–52; and "News Networks between Italy and Europe," in B. Dooley, ed., *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2010), pp. 51–67.

¹⁵ Georg Christ, "A Newsletter in 1419? Antonio Morosini's Chronicle in the Light of Commercial Correspondence between Venice and Alexandria," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 20 (2005), 35–66.

generally persons of elevated social rank, such as princely ministers, cardinals, great merchants, and postmasters. Some of these workshops became veritable news agencies, specialized in the commercialization of information. At the same time, they positioned themselves to provide other written products as well, such as political and satirical texts that struggled to find space in the book market for reasons of censorship but which enjoyed enduring success in manuscript form. Recent research on Venetian aristocratic libraries has found, for example, that a Venetian noble with an important political career focused his studies not only on books but also notably on writings of diverse genre and provenance that documented the actual practice of politics.¹⁶ Many of these were reproduced by hand and circulated by the gazetteers. The more organized of these newsmen even possessed actual catalogues of their products which could be reproduced on commission, with the corresponding prices. In Venice, the writings most in demand were always ambassadorial *relazioni*. It is well known that at the end of each diplomatic mission, every Venetian ambassador had to present the Senate with a report on the court or nation where he had served. From the 16th century on, these periodical overviews, which contained political but also geographical and anthropological information and were composed according to precise formulas of humanist derivation, aroused notable interest even outside of Venice and despite their supposed secrecy.

During the 17th century, printed gazettes began to appear alongside hand-written versions, which nonetheless continued to be compiled until the late 18th century, often by journalists who were simultaneously working on printed periodicals. The activity of Domenico Caminer, the true founder of modern Italian journalism, is significant in this light, as he was the author of a multitude of printed periodicals, but until 1780 he continued to compile well-informed and widely read handwritten gazettes.

Printed gazettes underwent a notable development as a result of the war against the Ottomans in the last decades of the 17th century, and particularly after the siege of Vienna in 1683, which in the years immediately following nurtured an unprecedented “news fever” in all ranks of society. It was just such a combination of hand-written and printed gazettes that generated conflicting rumors and constituted the principal stimulus for

¹⁶ Dorit Raines, “L’arte di ben informarsi. Carriera politica e pratiche documentarie nell’archivio familiare di patrizi veneziani: I Molin di San Pantalon,” in L. Casella and Roberto Navarrini, eds., *Archivi nobiliari e domestici. Conservazione, metodologie di riordino e prospettive di ricerca storica* (Udine, 2000), pp. 187–210.

public discussion in the city among the most disparate social groups, and on a wide variety of subjects from politics to religion.¹⁷ From the end of the 17th century through the entire century to follow, there came to flourish in Venice a multiform market of information that was a notable characteristic of the Venetian cultural life of the time.¹⁸

The Venetian Book between the 16th and the 18th Centuries

Returning to the history of the printed book, its period of greatest development was shaken by the religious conflicts of the 16th century when, on the heels of the Roman Church's reaction, Venice too had to confront the diffusion of Protestant thought and the need to impose a system of control that might prevent the spread of heresy.¹⁹ The great European division caused by the Protestant Reformation had significant consequences on book production. As we shall see, while the Republic of Venice always attempted to restrain the growing demands of the Roman Church, newly reorganized after the Council of Trent, the overall cultural climate and the demand for books underwent important changes. In Catholic states, publishers' catalogues changed, substituting potentially risky titles—including the majority of books in the vernacular languages—with devotional works and others of a religious or liturgical nature. The very geography of European publishing changed as well. While new great publishing centers were developing in central and northern Europe, Venice progressively lost contact with the North and particularly with Protestant-controlled areas, though it was able to maintain a marked supremacy in Italy and a position of some importance in the Mediterranean. The Iberian peninsula continued to be an especially key market for Venetian publishers, given the dearth of important local publishers. Alongside the Venetian printers, in fact, many of the great continental publishing houses competed for supremacy there; first among these were the Plantin of

¹⁷ On military newspapers from the late 17th century, see Mario Infelise, "The War, the News and the Curious: Military Gazettes in Italy," in B. Dooley and S. Baron, eds., *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London/New York, 2001), pp. 216–36. On the debates stimulated by such newsletters, see Federico Barbierato, *Politici e ateisti, Percorsi della miscredenza a Venezia fra Sei e Settecento* (Milan, 2006), Engl. trans., *The Inquisitor in the Hat Shop. Inquisition, Forbidden Books and Unbelief in Early Modern Venice* (Farnham, 2012).

¹⁸ Marino Berengo, *Giornali veneziani del Settecento* (Milan, 1962).

¹⁹ Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540–1605* (Princeton, 1977).

Antwerp, who continued to enjoy the protection of royal privileges under Philip II.²⁰

From the mid-16th century on, Venice was thus on its way to losing its place as “an entire world” that it had enjoyed in Manuzio’s day. Other European metropolises were growing, especially as the capitals of great territorial states and empires that extended far beyond the confines of Europe and the Mediterranean. However, the decline of Venice was slow and not always perceived as such by those who experienced it. Between highs and lows, Venice remained one of the richest, most cosmopolitan, and most culturally vibrant cities on the continent until the fall of the Republic at the end of the 18th century, a must-see destination on every “grand tour,” and with an overall publishing output that lived up to its reputation. As the most important center in Italy and among the top in Europe, Venice remained a focal point for the book market.

Taking a closer look, the 17th century was the period of truly epochal transformations. Until 1620, Venetian production remained high and continued to surpass English publishers for number of titles produced. In the period 1620–50, however, the situation changed decisively as a grave crisis hit the sector. In this period, the number of active presses in Venice, which at the height of 16th-century production had risen to 125, fell to 15–20, and the quantity of titles produced annually went from an average of 350 to just a few dozen. This resulted both from an increasingly fierce international competition and from the constant political instability of the time. In 1622, Venetian printers complained of the Spanish king’s decision to prohibit his subjects having their works published abroad. The situation was further worsened by the Thirty Years’ War, which gravely impeded long-distance continental commerce, and the terrible plague of 1630 and its economic and demographic repercussions. These decades of depression witnessed the ultimate decline of the great Renaissance publishing houses such as the Giunti and the Giolito, both of whom definitively closed shop.²¹

²⁰ On the general trends in Italian and Venetian publishing in the 17th and 18th centuries in the European context, see Mario Infelise, “La librairie italienne (XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles),” in F. Barbier, S. Juratic, and D. Varry, eds., *L’Europe et le livre. Réseaux et pratiques du négoce de librairie XVI^e–XIX^e siècles* (Langres, 1996), pp. 81–97; and Henri Jean Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII^e siècle (1598–1701)* (Geneva, 1969), pp. 5–31, 296–330. More in detail on Venice: Mario Infelise, *L’editoria veneziana nel ‘700* (Milan, 1989), also recommended for a more detailed bibliography.

²¹ Mario Infelise, “La crise de la librairie vénitienne, 1620–1650,” in Frédéric Barbier et al., eds., *Le livre et l’historien: études offertes en l’honneur du professeur Henri-Jean Martin* (Geneva, 1997), pp. 343–52.

This crisis brought about a long-term reorganization of the entire Venetian publishing system, which began to give signals of recovery in the last decades of the 17th century. This period saw new forms of investment in the publishing sector, and new modes of publicizing products. First of all, there was a notable move to increase production of religious books, undoubtedly the most profitable genre. Exploiting the inexhaustible demand for such texts in the Catholic world, several great publishers were able to weather the storm and ultimately reanimate the city's publishing industry as a whole. A useful example would be the parabola of the Venetian house of the Baglioni, the greatest Italian company in the years around the turn of the 18th century. At the end of the 16th century, the dynasty's founder Tommaso had been closely associated with circles in Venice and Padua particularly interested in scientific debates and of a strongly anti-clerical political stance. He represented Roberto Meietti, publisher of the Republic's chief theologian and fierce adversary of the papal court Paolo Sarpi, and attended the major German book fairs from which he imported non-orthodox books into Venice. Among the other works in his catalogue were also several of Galileo's, principally the 1610 *Sidereus Nuncius*. After Tommaso's death from plague in 1631, his heirs chose a radically new direction more in line with the changing times. These would be years in which Venice, weakened by a long, exhausting war against the Ottomans in defense of the island of Candia (Crete), would have to moderate its previously intransigent aversion to clerical interference in order to obtain aid from the Holy See. The Baglioni thus chose to focus their efforts on liturgical and theological texts, which enjoyed a more profitable and secure market and were more difficult to counterfeit. In only a few decades, they created one of the most successful commercial enterprises in Europe, such that within two generations the heirs of the agent of small printer accustomed to wander about the book fairs of Europe acquired enough wealth to purchase a title of Venetian nobility. In the wake of the Baglioni, the greatest book entrepreneurs of the day were nearly always those who serviced the enormous ecclesiastical market, in a period also notable for the massive rebuilding of numerous extremely wealthy monastic libraries.²²

²² See the studies of Antonella Barzazi: "Ordini religiosi e biblioteche a Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 21 (1995), 141–228; and *Gli affanni dell'erudizione. Studi e organizzazione culturale degli ordini religiosi a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Venice, 2004).

The success of religious books also contributed to the revival of other genres, and Venice once again became a principal center for the European book trade, benefitting as well from the new-found dynamism of the Republic of Letters in which intellectual exchange became ever more frequent and intense. Literary journalism thus came to play a fundamental role in bringing together and informing European *litterati*, functioning simultaneously as a tool of scientific and literary dissemination and commercial promotion. Such operations were numerous in the late 17th century, and the 30 years after 1710 saw the affirmation of the *Giornale de' letterati d'Italia*, which became one of the primary tools of information for the scientific world.²³

This period produced numerous editions of great prestige. There appeared imposing works of erudition, large-format atlases, and multi-volume encyclopedias and dictionaries in every branch of knowledge. Illustrators and engravers took on renewed importance, working constantly to satisfy the demands of printers and booksellers, and in doing so gave a unique luster to the editorial production of the time. In the late 17th century, the Franciscan cartographer Vincenzo Coronelli's tireless work gave birth to an innumerable quantity of large illustrated atlases, city plans, and *vedute* of Mediterranean and European fortresses. The same period witnessed the initial successes of the great Venetian *vedutisti*, from Antonio Carlevaris to Canaletto, whose works were systematically circulated by an army of engravers looking to satisfy the growing European demand for such images. Equally lively was the development of book illustrations, a trend which continued throughout the 18th century and made Venice a European capital of copper engraving. The painter Giambattista Piazzetta, for example, collaborated with various printers illustrating the works of Bossuet, a famous edition of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and a notably refined *Beatae Mariae Verginis Officium* published by Giambattista Pasquali. In other cases, veritable *équipes* of illustrators and engravers were formed, as happened in 1756 for Petrarch's *Rime* published by Antonio Zatta.²⁴ Publishers such as Pasquali and Albrizzi lent particular attention to this sort of production, sought after as it was by great European collectors. The British consul in Venice, Joseph Smith, protector of

²³ Brendan Dooley, *Science, Politics and Society in Eighteenth-Century Italy: The Giornale de' Letterati d'Italia and its World* (New York, 1991).

²⁴ On the 18th-century illustrated book, see Giuseppe Morazzoni, *Il libro illustrato veneziano del Settecento* (Milan, 1943); on engravers, see Dario Succi, ed., *Da Carlevaris al Tiepolo. Incisori veneti e friulani del Settecento* (Venice, 1983).

Canaletto and supplier of works of art to the British Crown, was long the financier of Pasquali's Venetian firm whose store-front sign, designed by Antonio Visentini, read *La felicità delle lettere* [the happiness of literature/the humanities].²⁵ The success of engravings contributed as well to the trend of event announcements, which quickly became occasions for great families to demonstrate their wealth and prestige.²⁶

Nor did illustrations remain the monopoly of the most expensive books. Many were the engraved frontispieces, pleasant cartoons, and *anteporte* that accompanied theatrical collections in small-format editions intended for an audience of middle-class tastes in those years in which this group was rising in importance.

This amazing recovery continued through to the mid-18th century and allowed the Venetian book to find its proper place once again on the European market, particularly in the Mediterranean areas, where it took particular advantage of the weakening of historic competitors Antwerp and Lyon.²⁷ Growth of exports to Spain was especially consistent. In 1763, Antoine Boudet, a Parisian publisher with conspicuous interests in the Iberian peninsula, wrote that "with respect to books, Spain is supplied mainly by foreigners." He estimated book imports to amount to 750,000 *livres tournois* [french money] divided among the following export centers: Venice, 46.6 per cent; Rome, Milan, and Lucca 6.6 per cent; Antwerp 26.6 per cent; Lusanne, Geneva, Lyon, and Paris 13.3 per cent; and Avignon 6.6 per cent.²⁸ More recent studies of the Spanish book have largely corroborated such data through analyses of books conserved in libraries. The old collections of the University Library of Santiago de Compostela show, for example, that in the period 1700–49, 38.4 per cent of its books were published in Italy, followed by 32.9 per cent in France. Venice produced the greatest share of books of Italian provenance, 12.6 per cent to the

²⁵ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters. A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (London, 1963); and Frances Vivian, *Il console Smith mercante e collezionista* (Vicenza, 1971).

²⁶ See the case of the last doge Lodovico Manin, see Dorit Raines, *La famiglia Manin e la cultura libraria tra Friuli e Venezia nel '700* (Udine, 1997). On prints for special events, see Alberta Pettoello, *Libri illustrati veneziani del Settecento. Le pubblicazioni d'occasione* (Venice, 2005).

²⁷ Jacqueline Roubert, "La situation de l'imprimerie lyonnaise à la fin du XVII^e siècle," in *Cinq études lyonnaises* (Geneva, 1966), pp. 77–111.

²⁸ Paul Guinard, "Le livre dans la péninsule ibérique au XVIII^e siècle. Témoignage d'un libraire français," *Bulletin hispanique* 59 (1957), 176–98.

12.4 per cent of Rome.²⁹ Such books were, for the most part, in Latin and constituted mainly classical texts for use in schools, prayer books, and liturgical, theological, and juridical works.

Direct contacts with monastic orders and with Spanish booksellers contributed significantly to the Venetian book's success. The Aragonese clergy employed a *Rezo ecclesiastico* printed in Venice on commission. Then, in 1766, the minister general of the Franciscans gave the Baglioni the exclusive right to print breviaries, missals, and *diurni* for the order's use, and in 1773 the Remondini published the works of St Thomas at the request of the Spanish Dominicans with an investment of over 18,000 ducats.³⁰ In some cases these Venetian exports were camouflaged with false places of printing to mask their true origins, and indeed the above-mentioned version of St Thomas' *Summa* claimed to have been printed in Rome. In other circumstances, Spanish bookmen, unable to take on the burden of printing the works for which they had won the rights, entrusted the work to agents sent by Venetian publishers for that very purpose. Antonio de Castro was the Spanish agent for the publisher Orazio Poletti, and he traveled around Spain acquiring the publishing rights from struggling Spanish bookmen, organized their printing in Venice, and finally exported the entire stock back to Spain with the publishing information desired by the Spanish client. Such a system required a dense network of connections between Spain and Venice, and indeed the Baglioni maintained their own shop in Madrid, while many other great Venetian publishers had various correspondents throughout Iberia, especially in the principal ports such as Barcelona, Malaga, Cadiz, and Lisbon, with the last two specializing in shipments to Latin America. The Remondini enjoyed particular distinction in such commerce, as they specialized not only in the religious genre but also in selling popular prints in enormous volumes, which they distributed via hundreds of wandering salesmen from the Val Tesino in the Prince-Bishopric of Trent. The mobility of these vendors allowed them to sell such prints from America to the furthest regions of the Russian Empire.³¹

²⁹ Lucien Domergue, "Les livres importés en Galice au XVIII^e siècle," in *De l'alphabetisation aux circuits du livre en Espagne. XVI^e–XIX^e siècles* (Paris, 1987), pp. 433–46.

³⁰ Gasparo Gozzi, "Col più devoto ossequio." *Interventi sull'editoria (1762–1780)*, ed. M. Infelise and F. Soldini (Venice, 2003).

³¹ On travelling book-salesmen in Europe, see Laurence Fontaine, *Histoire du colportage en Europe: XV–XIX siècles* (Paris, 1993). For those from the Val Tesino, see Elda Fietta Ielen, *Con la cassella in spalla. Gli ambulanti di Tesino* (Ivrea, 1987).

Another important Mediterranean outlet was the Levant. From the 16th to the 18th century, 80 per cent of books printed with Greek characters came from Venice. Several Greek publishers, residing in Venice and specializing in the production of liturgical texts for the Orthodox church, were consistently among the greatest book entrepreneurs of the later 17th and 18th centuries. These same publishers were also engaged in printing texts in the Slavic languages, which they circulated from the Balkans to Moscow while hiding their Venetian origins behind false origins in Moscow or St Petersburg.

The Enlightenment brought still more profound transformations. The 1760s saw a quite rapid decline of religious book production which, as already noted, had been a cornerstone of the market. The crisis of the Jesuit order, first expelled from the Iberian and Bourbon realms in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV, had particularly notable consequences in Venice, as nearly one-third of religious book demand was suddenly lost. Other problems derived from the suppression of many convents and a general secularization of society, not to mention the heightened competition both within Italy and abroad and the increasing copyright infringements that accompanied it.

The new context clearly reflected the contradictions between the book production that characterized the Enlightenment and that of the Counter Reformation, which had been the principal engine in Venetian publishing during the previous half century. A more secular society drove a different demand that publishers did everything possible to satisfy, though such efforts could not compensate for losses in the religious book sector. These were decades characterized by interesting experiments in many directions; novels, series dealing with current events, French and English translations, gazettes, journals, almanacs, pamphlets of every sort, "Enlightened" essays, and theatrical collections all contributed to a great renewal of publishers' catalogues and was a fact often noted by foreigners coming to Venice.

But there was also another important phenomenon that helped ring in the changes in Venetian publishing. From the second half of the 16th century, there developed an increasing number of smaller publishers whose products sold big on purely local markets, and this European trend took root in smaller Italian centers as well. These materials were repetitive, cheap to produce, and of interest to all parts of society: booklets for prayer or for school, almanacs and lunar calendars, and images both religious and profane which were generally sold at fairs of little concern to major publishers. Nonetheless, such texts played a crucial role among low-literacy

populations by bringing such persons into contact with the printed text and stimulating their desire to learn to read and write. These initiatives were usually extremely circumscribed geographically. In one case, however, a small entrepreneur from the Venetian *terraferma*, starting from just such a small-scale operation, constructed a veritable publishing empire which a century later would be considered one of the largest in Europe.³² It was in Bassano, a town in the pre-alpine region about 60 kilometers from Venice, that Giovanni Antonio Remondini opened a small print-shop that in the first few decades produced devotional booklets, saint's lives, poetry collections, chivalric tales, school texts, practical use manuals, and, most of all, sacred images. With a catalogue of this sort, including hundreds of titles and more than 10,000 different printed images, the Remondini built up a commercial network extending from Latin America to the Russian Empire. Their business reached its maximum expansion in the second half of the 18th century. But even when Giuseppe Remondini moved his company's headquarters from Bassano to Venice in 1750, he maintained his entire industrial complex in the *terraferma* hinterland and with it the competitive advantages of using laborers unprotected by urban guild norms. Such tactics took the older Venetian publishers by surprise, accustomed as they were to a much slower production process. In contrast to the older publishers, the Remondini controlled every phase of production, from the paper itself to the selling of the finished product, and they took full advantage of the previously mentioned *colporteurs*, supplying them with merchandise and advancing them the money with which to set out around the world. They opened shops to distribute their literary and visual wares around Europe and supplied their workshops in Bassano with the necessary information about local religious cults, which allowed their illustrators in the Veneto to produce accurate images of forms of religious devotion in many centers of the Iberian peninsula and Latin America.

For the entire second half of the 18th century, the Remondini's operations allowed Venetian presses to reinforce their presence on the international book markets. It was ultimately the fall of the Republic in 1797 that put an end to Venice's dynamic publishing industry. In the Napoleonic years, Venice was no longer a capital, and in a radically changed political

³² On the Remondini, Mario Infelise, *I Remondini di Bassano. Stampa e industria nel Veneto del Settecento*, 2nd ed. (Bassano, 1990); Mario Infelise and Paola Marini, eds., *Remondini. Un editore del Settecento* (Milan, 1990).

and economic context, it lost its publishing supremacy as well, in this case to the dynamic expansion of Milan.

Censorship

The historiography of the last few decades has spilled much ink over the argument of literary censorship as part of a more general interest in systems of political and cultural control, and in defining church-state relations in Catholic Europe. Moreover, in the last decade, the opening of the Roman Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, whose holdings include the papers of the Holy Office and the Congregation of the Index, has given even greater stimulus to such studies.

The first move in this direction belongs to an important article by Antonio Rotondò in the early 1970s, which first sketched the outlines of the problem in modern terms and underlined the influence ecclesiastical censorship had exerted on Italian culture.³³ In the same years, Paul F. Grendler published his important study on the Roman Inquisition and the Venetian publishing industry in the 16th century, which was one of the first analytical monographs on the relationship between Rome and Venice with regard to censorship.³⁴ Previously, the prevailing notions had been mythical constructions of Venetian liberty, with the constant nourishment of a literary tradition going back to the 16th century, and with such distinguished contributors as Bodin and Voltaire.³⁵ This image was countered by the contrastingly negative representation proposed during the 19th century by the French historian Pierre Daru in his *Histoire de la République de Venise*, first published in 1817. The work took up themes from the anti-Venetian press campaigns of the 17th century, portraying the Republic as a place of shadows and suspicion governed by an arrogant and despotic oligarchy, a depiction which had had great influence on the image of Venice's history for the entire 19th century.³⁶

³³ Antonio Rotondò, "La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura," in *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 5, "I Documenti" (Turin, 1973), pp. 1397–1492.

³⁴ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition*.

³⁵ Limiting the citations to a pair of famous exemplars, Jean Bodin celebrated Venetian liberty in the *Colloquium heptaplomeres*. Two centuries later, Voltaire defined the city "refuge of liberty." Franco Venturi, "Venise, et par occasion de la liberté," in Alan Ryan, ed., *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honor of Isaiah Berlin* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 196–209.

³⁶ Claudio Povoio, "The Creation of Venetian Historiography," in J. Martin and D. Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State 1297–1797* (Baltimore/London, 2000), pp. 491–519; and Mario Infelise, "Venezia e il suo

Only in recent times have scholars abandoned such ideological visions and been able, finally, to contextualize the themes of censorship and liberty within the greater political and religious questions of the early modern period in a comparative analysis that has brought together developments in Venice with those in the other European states.

Attention to jurisdictional aspects has been the point of departure for many studies on censorship in the early modern period, aiming to define the responsibilities of the institutions charged with these sorts of control. There has been a return to the old debates of whether it was the Church with its hierarchical structure that should decide which books might be read, or if the state could have the right to evade such supervision, all the while keeping in mind that the political and ecclesiastical powers were not systematically antagonistic. Indeed, early modern governments were long sustained by the deep conviction that the spread of heresy threatened secular authority as well.

In comparison to the other Italian states, more sensitive to papal pressures and with much weaker publishing industries, Venice was largely able to maintain greater autonomy and limit the interference of the Holy See. It was also the only Italian state which paid constant attention to the problems of censorship, as the modern scholar can follow in great detail thanks to the abundant archival sources that began to appear with the introduction of the first printing houses and continued for more than three centuries.

Before 1527 there was no organized system of control, apart from a few sporadic attempts by the Church to intervene with regard to doctrinal and religious books. If the spread of Luther's theses starting in 1517 began to arouse concern, in 1518 Bernardino Stagnino had no problem printing his *Appellatio ad Concilium*, and in 1520 the Wittenberg reformer's three principal treatises were sold openly. Luther's excommunication in 1521 changed everything, even though until the mid-16th century the system of control was far from perfect, given the problems of enforcement in a city with a flourishing book industry and the constant presence of men of all religious faiths. In 1527 the government introduced restrictions for all books printed in Venice, as well as for imports. The Holy Office was re-established in 1543, and in 1548 the Republic formally accepted the authority of the Inquisition in its dominions, though under the control

passato. Storie miti 'fole,' in M. Isnenghi and S. Woolf, eds., *Storia di Venezia. L'Ottocento e il Novecento* (Rome, 2002), pp. 967–88.

of the public authority in the form of a specific magistracy in Venice and of the city rectors in the rest of the state. Other measures followed in the coming years, and in 1559 the first Roman Index was promulgated. The procedure for issuing the license to print books was finally made official in 1562, and it would remain in force, with some partial revisions, until the end of the 18th century. Each new manuscript to be printed had first to be read by three *revisori*: the Inquisitor of the Holy Office for religious arguments, a public *lettore* for moral ones, and a ducal secretary for political questions. Each of these gave a judgment which was presented to the magistrate of the *Riformatori* of the University of Padua, who would then issue the permit to be registered by the Council of Ten. This procedure was partially simplified in the 17th century. The *revisori* were cut to two, and the *Riformatori* took on the entire responsibility, which along with the other similar tasks recently given them, made them the primary political organ for cultural supervision.

With regard to publishing licenses, it is also important to consider that in a similar context the ecclesiastical authority's judgment was only one of the conditions for the definitive license; it was not the final act. In fact, the final permit was issued by the state. Thus the traditional ecclesiastical formula for the *imprimatur* was not accepted, even though this triggered endless jurisdictional conflicts in which the relations between Venice and the Holy See were constantly renegotiated in the light of the contingent political situation.³⁷ As such, between the end of the 16th and the end of the 18th century, there was no single procedure; rather, the disputes tended to favor the Roman or Venetian positions depending on the specific circumstances and the current state of their relations. Certainly, between 1596 and 1606, Venetian policy under the influence of Paolo Sarpi and Doge Leonardo Donà was more aggressive in the construction of a strong state censorship; but in other periods, such as the mid-17th century, the Republic was more docile with regard to the claims of the Roman court. It must also be underlined that, even in the moments of greatest political tension, the Republic's position did not move towards a more lax censorship. Consonant with the authoritarian ideas of the time, even such men as Sarpi, constantly accused by the Roman curia of being masked Protestants, maintained that controlling the circulation of ideas was fundamental to the conservation of the state. In their view, the

³⁷ Mario Infelise, "A proposito di *imprimatur*. Una controversia giurisdizionale di fine '600 tra Venezia e Roma," in *Studi veneti offerti a Gaetano Cozzi* (Venice, 1992), pp. 287–99.

government needed to maintain constant checks in this area, and above all it had to prevent churchmen from augmenting an ecclesiastical jurisdiction that was in competition with that of the secular authority.³⁸ It must be kept in mind, though, that this endemic conflict between the Church and Republic also ensured that Venice would maintain a more autonomous publishing industry and, especially, a greater circulation of books than anywhere else in Italy.

After the great controversies of the Interdict years and the concessions to the papacy in the mid-17th century during the War of Candia, the Republic resumed its anti-curial stance towards the end of the century. Its jurisdictional politics maintained this more aggressive stance throughout the first half of the 18th century, culminating in 1765 with the drastic limitations imposed on the powers of the Venetian Holy Office. It must be noted that the reform of censorship took place in what was now a completely transformed political and cultural climate. By the mid-18th century, those responsible for censorship were nearly always *litterati* chosen because of their intellectual openness. Men such as Carlo Lodoli, Gasparo Gozzi, and Giovanni Francesco Scottoni were supported by the reformist faction of the patriciate, which desired a more state-sponsored system of control for reasons both political and commercial, in the hopes of reanimating the Venetian publishing industry. Even those controlling book imports from abroad showed a new willingness to experiment, and in doing so definitively shook the protectionist system conceived in the first years of the Counter Reformation.

It was only in the last decade of the 18th century, with fears that the ideas of Revolutionary France might spread and infect Italy as well, that the Republic tried, alongside other Italian princes, to turn back the clock. But this effort met with little success in the wake of the great curiosity which the revolutionary fervor aroused.

Book Consumption and Popular Literature

Carlo Ginzburg's well-known work *The Cheese and the Worms* (1976), which recounts the dramatic story of Menocchio, a miller from Friuli tried and condemned by the Inquisition for having read orthodox texts and interpreted them heretically, used a novel methodological approach to

³⁸ Paolo Sarpi, "Sopra l'ufficio dell'inquisizione," in Sarpi, *Scritti giurisdizionalisti* (Bari, 1958), pp. 119–212.

highlight the theme of popular literary consumption and, in the process, greatly influenced similar studies, many of which have continued to draw on Venetian material.³⁹ While the adjective *popular* is not an exact definition for goods that, whatever their original target audience, enjoyed significant circulation among diverse social groups, it is beyond doubt that there existed a large body of texts which might have ended up in anyone's hands, and much Venetian production consisted of such material, as the case of the Remondini has shown. From the standpoint of the overall industry, the Bassano printers were certainly an exception, given the lack of other similar enterprises at the time. One cannot say the same, however, for the contents of their catalogue, which offered titles of proven popularity that had long been present not only in theirs but also in many other publishers' catalogues from the 16th to early 19th century.

Recently, many scholars have looked at this group of long-neglected questions, particularly because book catalogues have always struggled to document such texts, given the difficulties in finding works often not conserved in libraries. In addition, the world of written texts that might have passed through the hands of someone living between the 16th and 18th centuries was not only constituted by printed books. The previous pages have already noted the enduring survival of the manuscript in the particular case of the *avvisi*, but there were also other genres that endured for centuries in hand-written form. Such was the case of the *Clavicula Salomonis*, a title used and reused from the Middle Ages forward to propose diverse magical texts of enormous popularity. Federico Barbierato's studies not only have unveiled the modes of circulation of these works, omnipresent in 17th-century Venetian inquisitorial cases involving prohibited books, but also have shown their centrality to a world of magical practices in which elite and popular culture systemically converged.⁴⁰

Coming back to the printed book, hundreds of devotional works, saints' lives, chivalric tales, and poems in octave rhyme were considered texts of transitory consumption, and not necessarily intended for conservation by their readers. Such texts constitute a particularly interesting aspect of social history, and defining the relationship that developed between these works and their readers would help to highlight a series of important characteristics and cultural habits in Catholic Europe. From the earliest years

³⁹ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore/London, 1982; Ital. ed. Turin, 1976).

⁴⁰ Federico Barbierato, *Nella stanza dei circoli. Clavicula Salomonis e libri di magia a Venezia nei secoli XVII e XVIII* (Milan, 2002).

of the printing press there had existed an ample production of fliers and other printed sheets whose circulation was ensured by the most varied social characters.⁴¹ Those decades witnessed a particular experimentation with vernacular texts, such that the dynamism of the printing press contributed to higher literacy rates and the establishment of a linguistic canon for literary Tuscan.⁴² Indeed, in this area more than elsewhere, the consequences of increased ecclesiastical control determined by the Council of Trent would be felt, and such measures ended up penalizing, above all, written works in the spoken language. The prohibition of vernacular bibles was merely the most visible episode of this trend. Publishers soon adapted to the new climate and modified their catalogues so as to be in harmony with the spirit of Trent, most obviously in the new prevalence of devotional works. Such a situation clearly emerges from the Remondini's catalogue of *libri da risma* as reconstructed by Laura Canelos. They constitute the Italian equivalent of the English chapbooks or the French *Bibliothèque bleue*, and their persistence over time provides evidence with which to trace the most-used texts in families of every social group.⁴³ Directions of research in this area, nonetheless, are many. In the early modern period too, for example, texts could be combined with images to create products of popular consumption. Sabrina Minuzzi has been able to wander through the shop of an "average" bookseller with the help of an extraordinary late 17th-century inventory. She has thus recomposed the surprising and forgotten universe of texts and images that animated the Venice of the time, and reconstructed from the ground up the system of cultural consumption in the years of the European crisis of conscience, as well as the many possible combinations of prints, fliers, books, and objects that might have colored the collective imaginary.⁴⁴

Scholarship has now developed its sensibilities to the extent that the peculiarity of Venice and its territory are no longer the center of attention;

⁴¹ Rosa Salzberg, "The Lyre, the Pen and the Press: Performers and Cheap Print in Cinquecento Venice," in Pon and Kallendorf, eds., *The Book of Venice. Il Libro Veneziano*, pp. 251–76.

⁴² On the contribution of the Venetian publishers to the establishment of the literary vernacular, see Paolo Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza corretto. La stampa e le revisioni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani (1470–1570)* (Bologna, 1991). In more popular material, of interest is the case of Niccolò Zoppino: Luigi Severi, *Sitibondo nel stampar de' libri. Niccolò Zoppino tra lingua volgare, letteratura cortigiana e questione della lingua* (Manziana, 2009).

⁴³ Laura Canelos, *I libri da risma. Catalogo delle edizioni Remondini a larga diffusione (1650–1850)* (Milan, 2007).

⁴⁴ Sabrina Minuzzi, *Il secolo di carta. Antonio Bosio artigiano di testi e immagini nella Venezia del Seicento* (Milan, 2009).

rather, the rich Venetian documentation provides a point of departure for tackling more general questions of culture and comparing the Venetian experience with those of other European centers.

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EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE

Paul F. Grendler

Three key moments defined pre-university education in the Republic of Venice between 1400 and 1797. In the Renaissance, Venice created new state schools that lasted to the end of the Republic. Moreover, all Latin schools, whether state, independent, or clerical, adopted the humanistic curriculum, as humanism became the culture of the Latin-educated. Second, Venice did not participate fully in Catholic Reformation education, the pre-university schooling of the new religious orders that dominated Latin education in Italy from the late 16th century to 1773. Venice expelled the Society of Jesus, the most important order of the Catholic Reformation, in 1606 and did not permit it to return until 1657. Although the Somaschans (Clerics Regular of Somasca, who took their name from their motherhouse at Somasca, a tiny hamlet near Bergamo) operated schools in the Venetian Republic, the schools of the religious orders of the Catholic Reformation had less influence than in other Italian states. Third, in the late 18th century the Venetian government imposed major educational changes that reflected Enlightenment values. It expelled the regular clergy from the classroom and implemented a more utilitarian curriculum to be taught in the vernacular. Nevertheless, the changes were less radical than anticipated.¹

Medieval Background

Schools can be categorized according to their sponsors and financial support as state or communal, church, and independent. State schools were schools founded, financially supported, and supervised by the government, which appointed the teachers. For small cities and towns,

¹ I wish to thank Benjamin Ravid for his advice and careful reading and Howard Adelman and Konrad Eisenbichler for sending me publications. This article focuses on education in the mainland state of Venice because little is known about education in the overseas territories ruled by Venice. But Eric Dursteler, "Education and Identity in Constantinople's Latin Rite Community, c.1600," *Renaissance Studies* 18 (2004), 287–303, is a good start.

they should be named “communal schools,” because the town government was called the commune. Some towns had communal schools before becoming part of the Republic. This usually meant that the city council hired a master or two to teach a limited number of local boys and paid him from government revenues. Often, student fees supplemented the master’s salary. Because the Venetian government permitted its subject towns considerable freedom to manage their own internal affairs, those with communal schools kept them after absorption into the Venetian state. For example, the communes of Chioggia and Treviso appointed communal Latin teachers in the 14th century, and these positions continued in the 15th century and beyond. Verona appointed a communal master to teach *abbaco* [commercial arithmetic] as early as 1284 and maintained the position in the 15th century.²

Church schools were pre-university schools organized by and under the supervision of an ecclesiastical body such as bishop, cathedral chapter of canons, monastery, or parish. They usually taught both future clergymen and lay boys. Although church schools were common in the early Middle Ages, their numbers had declined precipitously by 1400.³ If Venice and the towns of the Veneto had more than a handful of church schools around 1400, they have not left a documentary footprint large enough to be noticed by historians.

By contrast, Venice had numerous independent schools in the 14th and 15th centuries. A freelance master created an independent school. He opened a school in his home or rented premises and taught all the boys whose parents were willing to pay him for his services. He was not subject to the control, approval, or supervision of any civic authority. Some independent masters tutored the children of wealthy households, either living in the house or coming daily to teach. Independent masters did almost all the pre-university teaching in Venice and the Veneto in the late Middle Ages and in the 15th century. Enrico Bertanza and Giuseppe Dalla Santa have documented the existence of hundreds of independent masters in Venice, as many as 55 teachers in a single year in the late 14th century

² Vincenzo Bellomo, “L’insegnamento e la cultura in Chioggia fino al secolo XV,” *Archivio veneto*, n.s., 18, vol. 35 (1888), 277–301; 36 (1888), pp. 37–56, at 49–50; Giuseppe Liberali, *Le origini del seminario diocesano* (Treviso, 1971), pp. 175–76; Eloisa Garibotto, “Le scuole d’abbaco a Verona,” *Atti e Memorie dell’Accademia di Agricoltura, Scienze e Lettere di Verona*, 4th serie, 24 (1923), pp. 315–22. See Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore/London, 1989), pp. 3–41, for a summary of medieval developments and more detail on communal and independent teachers.

³ Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 6–11.

and more in the 15th, through an arduous search in notarial documents.⁴ A few of the notarial acts record contracts between teachers and parents, and this information is very valuable. But most of the teachers named in notarial acts served only as witnesses, because they could read Latin. Hence, little is known about them and their schools.

Thus, as the 15th century opened, Venice had numerous independent teachers but no state or church schools, so far as can be determined. Veneto towns also relied heavily on independent masters but had the occasional communal master. Gherardo Ortalli summarizes what is known about late-medieval Venetian education.⁵

The Renaissance Expansion of Schooling

The Renaissance brought significant changes, the most important of which was the adoption of a humanistic curriculum based on the *studia humanitatis*, defined by Paul Oskar Kristeller as grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy, based on the reading and interpretation of their standard ancient authors in Latin and, to a lesser extent, in Greek.⁶ The humanist curriculum arrived early in the century in Venice. The first major humanist pedagogue to teach in the Venetian state was Gasparino Barzizza (c.1360–1431), who held an appointment as professor of rhetoric and moral authors at the University of Padua from 1407 to 1421. He also presided over a boarding school in his home for boys of pre-university and university age, whom he taught new approaches to the classics. Some of his boarding students were young Venetian nobles, and a few of his students became humanist scholars.⁷

In 1414, Guarino Guarini of Verona (1374–1460), a major pedagogical humanist, opened an independent school in Venice. His pupils included at least two Venetian nobles who became important humanists, Francesco Barbaro (1390–1454), already a young man when he studied with Guarini, and the very young Bernardo Giustiniani (1408–89). In addition,

⁴ Enrico Bertanza and Giuseppe Dalla Santa, *Documenti per la storia della cultura in Venezia*, vol. 1: *Maestri, scuole e scolari in Venezia fino al 1500* (Venice, 1907).

⁵ Gherardo Ortalli, *Scuole, maestri e istruzione di base tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Vicenza, 1993).

⁶ Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York, 1961), p. 10. This definition is found in many of his other works as well.

⁷ R. G. G. Mercer, *The Teaching of Gasparino Barzizza* (London, 1979), is the fundamental study. See also Silvia Marcucci, *La scuola tra xiii e xv secolo. Figure esemplari di maestri*, pref. by Luciana Bellatalla (Pisa/Rome, 2002), pp. 25–29, 46–48, 137–50 and passim.

while in Venice Guarini wrote his *Regulae grammaticales*, which became a widely used accidence and syntax manual. But Guarini was not satisfied in Venice, possibly because, not being a Venetian original citizen, he could not obtain a chancery position, the kind of post that humanists often filled elsewhere in Italy. So in 1419 Guarini moved to Verona, where he held two positions. The commune of Verona appointed him to teach rhetoric, including the *Epistles* and *Orations* of Cicero, the signature prose texts of a humanistic education, as a communal teacher at a good salary. He also operated an independent school with boarders. Guarini remained at Verona until 1430, producing a stream of humanistically trained pupils, including some Venetian patricians. He and his pupils, some of whom became influential humanistic pedagogues in turn, played major roles in the development of humanism in Venice, Verona, and the rest of the Veneto. Remigio Sabbadini many years ago chronicled the life of Guarini and published an invaluable edition of his correspondence, some of which Eugenio Garin has translated into Italian.⁸ Rino Avesani and Gian Paolo Marchi have studied the impact of Guarini and his pupils in Verona.⁹

Almost all scholars see Guarini as a significant and positive influence on the development of humanism and the Renaissance as a whole. By contrast, Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine charge that Guarini was only a skillful propagandist. He convinced parents to send their boys to him for humanist educations at considerable expense but failed to inculcate good moral values and eloquence. He succeeded only in teaching future civil servants how to write oratorical set pieces.¹⁰ Their book expresses an unconvincing iconoclastic view of humanism, in which Guarini serves as a notable example of its failures. Humanism was much more than this, and Guarini played a major role in Venetian and Veneto education and humanism. He merits more attention.

⁸ Remigio Sabbadini, *Guariniana. Vita di Guarino Veronese. La scuola e gli studi di Guarino Veronese*, ed. Mario Sancipriano (Turin, 1964); Guarino Guarini, *Epistolario di Guarino Veronese*, ed. Remigio Sabbadini, 3 vols (Venice, 1915–19; repr. Turin, 1967). See also Eugenio Garin, ed., *Il pensiero pedagogico dell'umanesimo* (Florence, 1958), pp. 306–433, 473–503.

⁹ See the excellent monograph of Rino Avesani, *Verona e il suo territorio*, 7 vols (Verona, 1960–2003), vol. 4 (1981): *Verona nel Quattrocento*, part 2: *La civiltà delle lettere*. See also Gian Paolo Marchi, “Per una storia delle istituzioni scolastiche pubbliche dall’epoca comunale all’unificazione del Veneto all’Italia,” in Gian Paolo Marchi, ed., *Cultura e vita civile a Verona. Uomini e istituzioni dall’epoca carolingia al Risorgimento* (Verona, 1979), pp. 37–42, 74–78, 95.

¹⁰ Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, “Humanism and the School of Guarino: A Problem of Evaluation,” *Past and Present* 92 (August, 1982), 58–80; and Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), pp. 1–28.

The Venetian government publicly endorsed humanism in the middle of the 15th century by creating an elite state school to teach the new humanistic curriculum. In 1446 the government appointed and paid a teacher to teach "grammar, rhetoric, and other subjects appropriate to the chancery and to write well" to 16 boys who served the government in small ways and were intended to become secretaries.¹¹ In 1460 the government added a second master, Gian Mario Filelfo (1426–80), a well-known humanist in his time and the son of the highly talented and visible humanist Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), to teach poetry, oratory, and history. Some of the most famous humanist scholars of the century succeeded Gian Mario Filelfo, as the Scuola di San Marco, as it was called, became an excellent humanistic school. The number of boys in the school rose to 53 in 1486, then was reduced to 30.¹²

Historians see the founding of the Scuola di San Marco as a major event in the educational and intellectual life of the city. It marked the first time that the state founded a school. It signaled the government's embrace of humanism. And although non-Venetian humanists still could not hold offices in the government, the two positions at the Scuola di San Marco were attractive and highly visible. The government could now appoint learned outsiders to prominent teaching positions where they might teach and enrich the city's intellectual life.

The government funded another school consisting of a single teacher who taught logic and Aristotelian philosophy. The Scuola di Rialto, sometimes called the school of philosophy, began about 1408. The Senate normally appointed a Venetian patrician known for his expertise in Aristotelian philosophy or logic.¹³ Young Venetians, including nobles, attended the lectures, studied at the University of Padua, and then pursued careers in government.

Scholars differ somewhat about how fully Venice embraced humanism. Manlio Pastore Stocchi sees the Venetian reception as incomplete and partial. He argues that the noble pupils of Barzizza and Guarini were not fully dedicated to the new culture; consequently, they did not

¹¹ "grammaticam, rethoricam et alias scientias aptas ad exercitum cancellarie ac belle scribere"; Arnaldo Segarizzi, "Cenni sulle scuole pubbliche a Venezia nel XV e sul primo maestro d'esse," *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* 75 (1915–16), 641.

¹² James Bruce Ross, "Venetian Schools and Teachers Fourteenth to Early Sixteenth Century: A Survey and a Study of Giovanni Battista Egnazio," *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1976), 521–66, is an excellent guide to the Scuola di San Marco and other matters.

¹³ Bruno Nardi, *Saggi sulla cultura veneta del quattro e cinquecento*, ed. Paolo Mazzantini (Padua, 1971), pp. 3–98; and Ross, "Venetian Schools," pp. 529–32, 557, 561–66.

create works of originality or significance on themes such as the nature of man. In contrast, Vittore Branca assesses the impact of Barzizza and Guarini, and humanism generally, as significant, positive, and coming into full bloom in the late 15th century with such a figure as Ermolao Barbaro the Younger (1453/54–92). Margaret L. King sees its impact to have been strong, although subordinate to Venetian ideology. Young patricians absorbed the classical tradition through their educations early in the 15th century, then developed a humanism consonant with Venetian values. Unlike humanists elsewhere, Venetian humanists had a pronounced Aristotelian philosophical bent. Above all, they put a premium on *unanimitas*, meaning concord, with the corollaries that individual views should be subordinated to the group, and traditional intellectual values upheld.¹⁴

The Senate expanded the number of state Latin schools teaching the humanistic curriculum in the 16th century. In 1551 the Senate passed a law mandating the appointment of an additional four humanists (upper school teachers) and six grammarians (lower school teachers) whose salaries would be paid by the state. These were *sestieri* schools, named for the six civil administrative districts of the city. The law was not fully implemented until 1567, at which time the Senate modified it to four schools, two on each side of the Grand Canal, with each school employing a humanist and a grammarian. Approximately 188 boys attended the state *sestieri* schools in the academic year 1587–88.¹⁵

The Venetian church had a single known school in the 15th century. Attached to the church of San Marco, it had one or two teachers who educated about 50 boys intended for the clerical life. It was an ecclesiastical school, possibly founded during the pontificate of Eugenius IV (1431–47), because it was attached to a church and it educated future clerics. But it was not a cathedral school, because San Marco was the doge's private chapel, not the patriarchal church. Hence, the Procurators of St. Mark, state officials, oversaw the affairs of the school and appointed teachers.

¹⁴ Manlio Pastore Stocchi, "Scuola e cultura umanistica fra due secoli," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, esp. pp. 118–21; Vittore Branca, "Ermolao Barbaro and Late Quattrocento Venetian Humanism," in J. R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 218–43; and Vittore Branca, "L'umanesimo veneziano alla fine del Quattrocento. Ermolao Barbaro e il suo circolo," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 (1980): *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, part 1, pp. 123–75; Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, NJ, 1986); King, *The Death of the Child Valerio* (Chicago/London, 1994).

¹⁵ Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 43, 63–70; and Vittorio Baldo, *Alunni, maestri scuole in Venezia alla fine del XVI secolo* (Como, 1977), pp. 37–42.

The school taught singing plus a rich humanistic curriculum that included Terence, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Horace, Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, Cicero's letters, and even Plautus' racy *Aulularia*.¹⁶

In the 16th century the Venetian church expanded clerical education. Patriarch Antonio Contarini (served 1508–24) founded six more schools for future clerics, one for each of the six *sestieri* of the city, later reduced to five, as the schools of the *sestieri* of Santa Croce and San Polo, the two smallest in area and population, were combined. The patriarch appointed a priest to teach in each school; the priest then chose an assistant and paid him out of his own salary. The patriarchate assessed the parishes in a *sestiere* for the funds to pay the teacher's salary. In the academic year 1587–88, the five clerical *sestieri* schools enrolled 185 or more boys. The high number suggests that the schools educated lay boys as well as future clergymen.¹⁷ Finally, in response to the canons of the Council of Trent, Venice established two seminaries in 1579 and 1581. They enrolled about 110 students in 1581, some of them probably young men.¹⁸

Despite the establishment of state and church schools in the Renaissance, the vast majority of boys fortunate enough to receive formal educations attended independent schools, a continuation of the medieval pattern. In the academic year 1587–88, the only year for which school attendance documentation is available, about 89 per cent of the boys studying in formal schools attended independent schools. About 4 per cent of the boys attended state *sestieri* schools, and about 7 per cent attended church schools.¹⁹

While state and clerical schools taught the Latin humanistic curriculum, 60 per cent of the boys in independent schools in the academic year 1587–88 studied vernacular reading and writing, plus *abbaco* and accounting. For Venice as a whole, 53 per cent of the boys in school followed the vernacular literature and *abbaco* curriculum, obviously to prepare for merchant careers.²⁰ Students in these schools read Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, chivalric romances, saints' lives, and vernacular morality works, instead of Cicero and Virgil. They also learned how to calculate the

¹⁶ Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 56–57.

¹⁷ Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 57–60; Baldo, *Alunni, maestri*, pp. 31–37.

¹⁸ Silvio Tramontin, "Gli inizi dei due seminari di Venezia," *Studi veneziani* 7 (1965), 363–77.

¹⁹ See Table 2.1 in Grendler, *Schooling*, p. 43.

²⁰ Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 48–49.

interest on a loan and to do double-entry bookkeeping. This curriculum has not received much attention.²¹ The different kinds of schools and curricula demonstrate that government, church, and parents wanted boys educated for specific career goals, a strong characteristic of Renaissance schooling.

Girls did not attend state or church schools, and only a tiny handful attended independent schools that taught elementary vernacular reading and writing. Some learned at home from a family member, or a teacher who came to the house. An unknown number of the daughters of nobles, original citizens, and wealthy merchant families received educations as long-term residents in female monasteries. Parents placed these girls, called *educande*, in convents when they were as young as seven years of age. The girls lived in the convent, subject to its rules including cloister, for years, until their parents removed them, typically in their teens when they were old enough to marry, or until the family could no longer afford the fees. Obviously, the wealthier the family the better the chance for a convent education for daughters.²²

Convent schooling of *educande* was probably modest in most cases, consisting of reading and writing, mostly in the vernacular, plus singing and sewing. Some girls, either through their own choice or bowing to family pressure, took vows and remained in the convent and may have received further education. Nuns as a group were probably the best educated women in Italy. However, while scholars have been able to study to a limited extent the literary and musical activities of nuns elsewhere in Italy, little such information about Venetian nuns has come to light. The best known Venetian literary nun was Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–52), who was tricked by her father into becoming a nun at the age of 16. She strongly denounced the practice of forced monachization in several books.²³

Although girls had fewer opportunities to learn, it is paradoxical that several of the best-known female scholars and writers of the Renaissance lived and wrote in Venice and the Veneto. They included Isotta Nogarola (1418–66), Cassandra Fedele (1465–1558), and Laura Cereta (1469–99) from

²¹ The only survey of the vernacular literature and *abbaco* curriculum is Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 273–329. Warren Van Egmond, *Practical Mathematics in the Italian Renaissance: A Catalog of Italian Abacus Manuscripts and Printed Books to 1600* (Florence, 1980), presents a comprehensive list of *abbaco* manuscripts and printed books for all of Italy, and explains well the contents of *abbaco* instruction.

²² Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 96–100.

²³ Emilio Zanette, *Suor Arcangela monaca del Seicento veneziano* (Venice/Rome, 1960).

the Veneto, and the Venetian vernacular writers Veronica Franco (1546–91), Moderata Fonte (1555–92), and Lucrezia Marinella (1571–1653).²⁴

In order to estimate literacy rates, it is necessary to add the number of boys and girls who attended formal schools with those who received informal schooling. It is likely that about 26 per cent of boys of school age, defined as ages six through 15, attended formal schools in 1587. In addition, some boys learned at home, as apprentices in shops. Other children acquired basic literacy at the numerous Schools of Christian Doctrine (catechism schools taught by laymen and laywomen) in the city. Meeting on Sundays and the many religious holidays of the year, the Schools of Christian Doctrine imparted basic literacy by teaching boys and girls (in separate schools) how to read common prayers and to do a little writing.²⁵ When estimates of the number of boys who acquired basic literacy in these ways are added, Venice may have had a male literacy rate of about 33 per cent. If most boys left school at the ages of 12 or 13, the literacy rate was higher. By contrast, fewer than 1 per cent of girls attended formal schools outside the home or convent. When girls who acquired at least basic literacy at home or in catechism schools, plus an estimated number of *educande*, are added to the total, the female literacy rate reached 12 per cent to 13 per cent. If the school age is assumed to be 6 through 12, then the female literacy rate was higher.²⁶

Towns and villages in the Venetian mainland state acted much like Venice, not because Venice imposed its pedagogical will but because all followed a peninsula-wide educational pattern. Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, and Vicenza, as well as hamlets in the *bergamasco*, shared broad educational experiences with local variations.²⁷ They offered a mix of independent, communal, and church schools; in Bergamo a major confraternity also sponsored schools and provided subsidies to students. Because resources were limited, the lines separating schools were permeable, as parents, communal authorities, and others worked together to create schools. Individual initiatives and local connections mattered a great deal:

²⁴ Patricia H. Labalme, "Venetian Women on Women: Three Early Modern Feminists," *Archivio veneto*, 5th serie, vol. 117 (1981), 98–104.

²⁵ Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 333–62.

²⁶ See Grendler, *Schooling*, pp. 42–47, for further explanation.

²⁷ Christopher Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education: Schooling in Bergamo and the Venetian Republic, 1500–1650* (Toronto/Buffalo, 2010), provides a comprehensive study of schooling in Bergamo plus information on schooling elsewhere in the Veneto. It is an excellent comparative study. For Verona, see Marchi, "Istituzioni scolastiche," which covers the Middle Ages to 1797.

a bequest by a layman or clergyman might produce educational dividends for centuries. Like Venice, Veneto communal councils embraced humanism, proclaiming that the *studia humanitatis* taught virtue and eloquence. They hired humanists well known in their time to teach in their Latin schools, although they had difficulty retaining them. And by the second half of the 16th century, Schools of Christian Doctrine taught prayers and basic literacy in large towns and hamlets across the Veneto. Indeed, catechism schools may have had a greater positive impact on literacy in the Veneto than in Venice.²⁸

Catholic Reformation Schooling

The schools of the new religious orders of the Catholic Reformation, especially the Society of Jesus, dominated Latin education in Italy in the 17th and 18th centuries. The religious orders sought to teach their version of Christian humanism, which was a combination of the *studia humanitatis* and Catholic doctrine. The schools of the new religious orders began in the middle of the 16th century and developed their characteristic structures and curricula by 1600. They reached their peak in enrollment and influence in the second half of the 17th century but fell out of favor with Enlightenment *philosophes* and rulers and were often suppressed in the late 18th century. *La Serenissima* did not participate fully in Catholic Reformation education because of its hostility toward the Jesuits.

In 1550 the Jesuits opened a school in Venice with 20 external students (lay boys) and 11 Jesuit scholastics (young members of the Society) in attendance.²⁹ They opened a similar school in Padua in 1552, followed by schools in Brescia (1567) and Verona (1578). While the Venetian school soon closed, those in Brescia and Verona did well, and the Padua school became the crown jewel of the Jesuit presence in the Republic of Venice. The Paduan Jesuits offered a lower school teaching Latin grammar, humanities, and rhetoric to boys mostly ten to 16 years of age, and an upper school teaching logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics, all

²⁸ Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education*, pp. 147–59, 265, 298–300.

²⁹ The fundamental work on the Jesuits in Venice and the Veneto is Mario Zanardi, ed., *I Gesuiti e Venezia. Momenti e problemi di storia veneziana della Compagnia di Gesù*. Atti del Convegno di Studi, Venezia, 2–5 ottobre 1990 (Padua, 1994). Its 29 studies in nearly 900 pages provide an enormous amount of information. Mario Zanardi, “I ‘domicili’ o centri operativi della Compagnia di Gesù nello Stato veneto (1543–1773),” in Zanardi, ed., *I Gesuiti e Venezia*, pp. 89–179, is particularly important.

based on Aristotle, plus mathematics and theology, to boys in their late teens. In 1582 the Jesuits added a boarding school for noble boys. In 1589 the Paduan school had 450 students, including 70 noble boarders.³⁰

The success of the Jesuit school angered some university professors and students, because it competed effectively with the University of Padua in the humanities and philosophy. The campaign against the Jesuits began with student protests and culminated with a fiery oration to the Venetian Senate by Cesare Cremonini (1550–1631), second position ordinary professor of natural philosophy. He charged that the Jesuits had deliberately and stealthily founded a rival university that drew students away from the University of Padua, an act contrary to Venetian law that made Padua the sole university of the Venetian state. On 23 December 1591, the Venetian Senate ordered the Jesuits at Padua to teach Jesuit students only. While the local Jesuits, with the support of prominent citizens of Padua and many senators, wanted the Senate to permit the Jesuits to continue to operate a lower school open to lay students, the Jesuit father-general decided against this. The Jesuits closed their Paduan school, drastically reduced the size of the Jesuit community there, and deployed their members elsewhere. The 1591 battle attracted considerable attention at the time and subsequently. The last scholarly word may not have been written.³¹

Venetian hostility against the Jesuits peaked at the Interdict. After a series of church-state jurisdictional disputes, Pope Paul V laid the Republic of Venice under interdict in April 1606. He forbade clergymen from exercising almost all sacerdotal functions, including celebrating Mass and administering the sacraments. The Venetian government ordered all clergymen in the state to ignore the Interdict under pain of death, and most obeyed. But the Jesuits refused; so the Venetian government ordered the

³⁰ John Patrick Donnelly, "The Jesuit College at Padua: Growth, Suppression, Attempts at Restoration: 1552–1606," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 51 (1982), 48.

³¹ Antonio Favaro, *Lo Studio di Padova e la Compagnia di Gesù sul finire del secolo decimosesto* (Venice, 1878), is the initial account and still valuable for the documents printed. See also Antonio Favaro, "Nuovi documenti sulla vertenza tra lo Studio di Padova e la Compagnia di Gesù sul finire del secolo decimosesto," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, serie 3, vol. 21 (1911), 89–100; and Roberto Cessi, "L'Università giurista di Padova ed i Gesuiti alla fine del Cinquecento," *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* 81 (1921–22), part 2, pp. 585–601. Donnelly, "The Jesuit College at Padua," gives the best short account of the story. Maurizio Sangalli, *Cultura, politica e religione nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento. Gesuiti e Somaschi a Venezia* (Venice, 1999); and Sangalli, *Università accademie Gesuiti. Cultura e religione a Padova tra Cinque e Seicento* (Padua, 2001) add new information including Jesuit documents. Paul F. Grendler, *The University of Mantua, the Gonzaga, and the Jesuits, 1584–1630* (Baltimore/London, 2009), pp. 218–23, focuses on Cremonini's objections to Jesuit pedagogy and Jesuit responses.

Jesuits to leave Venice on 8 May and to leave the rest of the Venetian state on 10 May 1606. The Jesuits had to abandon their college with its professed house in Venice, their colleges without schools in Padua and Vicenza, their college with a small lower school in Candia (Crete), and their colleges with thriving schools in Brescia and Verona. The small Jesuit boarding school for nobles in Brescia that attracted local and Venetian noble boys had to close as well.³²

When the Jesuits were banished, the Somaschans took their place to a limited degree. Founded in 1534 by Girolamo Miani (or Emiliani, 1486–1537), a Venetian nobleman, the Somaschans began by rescuing orphan boys from begging in the streets. They housed the boys, teaching them Christian doctrine, reading, writing, arithmetic, and a trade. They also founded orphanages for girls. The Venetian government entrusted the Somaschans with the direction and teaching of the two Venetian seminaries in the late 16th century. There the students received a standard humanistic education whose texts included the *Apophthegmata* of Paolo Manuzio, which was an expurgated version of the *Apophthegmata* of Erasmus, even though the Index of Prohibited Books had banned most of Erasmus' works.³³

By 1600 the Somaschans had added the mission of operating boarding schools for upper-class boys in which they taught a Latin humanistic curriculum modeled on the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum*. In 1650 the Venetian Senate authorized the Somaschans to establish a school adjacent to the church of Santa Maria della Salute to teach noble and citizen youths. The so-called "Salute school" was a day school teaching grammar, the humanities, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology; it quickly became the most important school in the city. A future doge, Carlo Ruzzini (b. 1653; doge 1732–35) and a number of other Venetian leaders and intellectuals studied there until it closed in 1754. In addition, several Somaschan priests played prominent roles in the intellectual life of Venice in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

³² Zanardi, "I 'domicilia,'" pp. 95–96. A Jesuit college was the Society's residence in a town; the college and the church assigned to the Society were the center of Jesuit ministries. If the college had a school, its classes either met in the college or in a nearby building. By the 17th century, the majority of Jesuit colleges in Italy operated free schools open to external students. A professed house meant a residence in which Jesuits who had taken their solemn vows dedicated themselves for a period of time to attaining a higher level of spiritual perfection than what was possible while carrying on their normal duties. See Zanardi, "I 'domicilia,'" pp. 93–94. When the school proved not very successful, the Jesuits in 1568 established a professed house at the Venetian college.

³³ See Sangalli, *Cultura, politica e religione*, pp. 385–418, at pp. 398–400 for the teaching of Erasmus' work.

The Somaschans also founded a boarding school in Padua, a school for nobles in Brescia, another school for nobles with foreign boarders in Bergamo, and a third school for nobles including boarders in Verona, in the 17th century.³⁴ Further research on Somaschan schools is needed.

But many Venetian and *terraferma* noble parents still wanted their sons to receive Jesuit educations. So they sent them to Jesuit boarding schools outside the Venetian state, despite prohibitions barring contact with the Society. Approximately 350 young Venetian nobles and another 1350 noble boys from the rest of the Venetian state attended the Jesuit noble boarding schools of Bologna and Parma between 1600 and 1769.³⁵

The Republic permitted the Jesuits to re-enter the Venetian state in 1657, at which time the Society substantially expanded its educational mission. The Jesuits reopened and enlarged their noble boarding school in Brescia. Venetian noble boys made up 35 per cent to 40 per cent of the enrollment there before 1606 and after 1657; the rest came from the Veneto and elsewhere.³⁶ After 1657 the Jesuits offered both upper-level and lower-level schooling at Verona, they created new upper and lower schools at Venice and Padua, and they added new lower schools at Belluno and Vicenza. Numerous Venetian and *terraferma* noble boys continued to attend Jesuit noble boarding schools outside the Venetian state.³⁷ For example, three future doges—Pietro Grimani (b. 1677; doge 1741–52), Marco Foscarini

³⁴ For the Somaschan schools in Venice and Pauda, see Sangalli, *Cultura, politica e religione*, pp. 363–446; and Antonella Barzazi, *Gli affanni dell'erudizione. Studi e organizzazione culturale degli ordini religiosi a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Venice, 2004), pp. 73–196. For the Somaschan school at Bergamo, see Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education*, pp. 193–222. For the Somaschan school at Verona, see Angelo Orlandi, "Scuole ecclesiastiche dall'Umanesimo all'Ottocento," in Gian Paolo Marchi, ed., *Cultura e vita civile a Verona. Uomini e istituzioni dall'epoca carolingia al Risorgimento* (Verona, 1979), pp. 294–95; and Marchi, "Istituzioni scolastiche," pp. 54–55. For the Piarist schools, see Maurizio Sangalli, *Le smanie per l'educazione. Gli scolopi a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Rome, 2012).

³⁵ Gian Paolo Brizzi, *La formazione della classe dirigente nei Sei-Settecento. I seminaria nobilium nell'Italia centrosettentrionale* (Bologna, 1976), pp. 38, 40; and Brizzi, "Scuole e collegi nell'antica Provincia Veneta della Compagnia di Gesù," in *Gesuiti e Venezia. Momenti e problemi di storia veneziana della Compagnia di Gesù*, Atti del Convegno di Studi, Venezia, 2–5 ottobre 1990, ed. Mario Zanardi (Padua, 1994), pp. 502–05, 511.

³⁶ Marco Agosti, "La tradizione pedagogica fino al Settecento," in Giovanni Treccani degli Alfieri, ed., *Storia di Brescia*, 5 vols (Brescia, 1963–64), vol. 3 (1964): *La dominazione veneta (1576–1797)*, p. 322.

³⁷ Zanardi, "I 'domicilia,'" pp. 95–96; Brizzi, "Scuole," pp. 507–11. For the Jesuit school at Verona, see Orlandi, "Scuole ecclesiastiche," pp. 293–94; and Marchi, "Istituzioni scolastiche," pp. 54–55.

(b. 1696; doge 1762–63), and the last doge, Ludovico Manin (b. 1725; doge 1789–97, d. 1802)—studied at the Jesuit school in Bologna.³⁸

The Venetian patriciate held sharply contrasting views about the Society of Jesus, and schools were a key issue. One faction hated the Jesuits, seeing them as undercover agents of the papacy and Spain determined to undermine the Venetian state. They reached this conclusion even though no evidence of Jesuit political activity in Venice beyond support of the papacy during the Interdict has come to light, and despite the fact that the Jesuits had their own problems with several popes and the Spanish crown. Other patricians loved the Jesuits; they sent their sons to Jesuit schools even when the Society was banned. Venetian subjects in the *terraferma* reproduced the divisions. During the Interdict and during the years of Jesuit banishment, Veneto residents crossed into the Mantuan state in order to receive the sacraments from Jesuit priests, and they flocked to Jesuit schools after 1657.³⁹ By contrast, Bergamo did not permit the Jesuits to establish a school in the town until 1711 and then dismissed them in 1729.⁴⁰ A comprehensive study of Venetian and Veneto attitudes toward the Jesuits awaits its historian.⁴¹

The Reforms of the 1770s

A third phase in Venetian education occurred in the late 18th century. The leaders of *La Serenissima*, like the rulers of other Italian civil governments, embraced Enlightenment educational ideas. The state must control education, the regular clergy should be driven out of the classroom, and the curriculum needed to be more practical. Beginning in 1768 and continuing to the end of the Republic, the Venetian government imposed changes on the schools and teachers of Venice along these lines. Nevertheless, much of the school system erected in the Renaissance remained in place in weakened form. And it is doubtful that the new pedagogical structure served students and society any better in the short term than Renaissance schools.

³⁸ Brizzi, "Scuole," p. 504.

³⁹ Giuseppe Gorzoni, *Istoria del Collegio di Mantova della Compagnia di Gesù scritta dal padre Giuseppe Gorzoni. Parte prima*, ed. Antonella Bilotto and Flavio Rurale (Mantua, 1997), pp. 106–07.

⁴⁰ Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education*, pp. 176–93.

⁴¹ Gaetano Cozzi, "Fortuna, e sfortuna, della Compagnia di Gesù," in Zanardi, ed., *I Gesuiti e Venezia*, pp. 59–88, makes a good start.

The Venetian state began to move toward Enlightenment educational reforms by assaulting the regular clergy.⁴² Citing the Council of Trent's discouragement of small monastic establishments, *La Serenissima* decided to suppress small male and female convents. Between 1769 and 1793 the Venetian government closed hundreds of convents and seized their buildings and lands. It then sold the lands, over 11 million hectares, with the state realizing about 6 million ducats. From 1766 to 1790 the number of the regular clergy in the Republic fell from 7770 to 4625, a reduction of 40 per cent, and the number of the secular clergy fell from 22,307 to 20,274, a decline of 9 per cent.⁴³

The state justified its actions on the grounds that it needed money to care for the destitute, to support the poorest of the secular clergy, and to provide for the education of youth, especially patrician youth. A Senate decree of 1772 proclaimed that a sold foundation of studies formed the future man and citizen who would govern the Republic well, an educational commonplace that originated in the 14th century or earlier and was often expressed in the Renaissance.⁴⁴ Another reason was that the Venetian Republic was deeply in debt. The seizure and sale of Church lands enabled the state to pay its creditors, who included nobles and other wealthy Venetians, while the laymen who bought Church properties at less than their value became members of the landed gentry. Or else they resold the lands at a profit. The Venetian state did pay subsistence allowances to members of the regular clergy whose monasteries were suppressed, it devoted more resources to poor relief, and it spent a tiny fraction of the realized income on education. Nevertheless, the Venetian confiscation of church lands was an act of grand larceny. The Italian and foreign rulers of other Italian states did the same in the late 18th century, in the early 19th century, and again during unification.

⁴² The basic studies of the school reforms of the last thirty years of the 18th century are Giuseppe Gullino, *La politica scolastica veneziana nell'età delle riforme* (Venice, 1973); and Gullino, "Educazione, formazione, istruzione," in Gino Benzon and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 8 (1998): *L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, ed. Piero Del Negro and Paolo Preto, pp. 745–99. Although the information is the same, the former work offers more detail and valuable documentary appendices. The latter work is broader in scope, condenses key information, and adds Gullino's tart observations. Both are well documented. The following account is based on both, although Gullino, "Educazione," will be preferred because it is more easily accessible.

⁴³ Gullino, "Educazione," p. 795 n. 27.

⁴⁴ See Gullino, "Educazione," p. 795 n. 28, for quotes from the Senate decree of 3 September 1772.

The original citizen and man of letters Gasparo Gozzi (1713–86) provided the intellectual rationale for pedagogical changes. At the request of the Riformatori dello Studio di Padova and another magistracy, Gozzi drafted six memoranda on education between 1770 and 1775. Influenced by European *philosophes*, Gozzi wanted education to teach good morals and civic values defined in non-religious terms. He wanted education to be practical, which he would accomplish by making Italian the language of instruction. He wanted to eject clergymen from the classroom, and he was hostile to the Jesuits. In 1770 he dismissed them as “consummate masters in teaching useless matter with pompous ostentation.”⁴⁵ Although the leadership of the Republic asked Gozzi for advice, it did not always follow it.

The Republic began with reform of the state *sestieri* schools. In the early 18th century there were six, each with a teacher. In 1774 the Venetian government banned Latin and added arithmetic and a little geometry to the curriculum. Most important, it expanded the number of teachers and schools. By 1787 Venice had 19 *sestieri* schools, each with a teacher. They enrolled 761 students, 40 per teacher. The students (still all boys) were the sons of boatmen (the largest group), cabinet makers, builders, jewelers, small grocers (*fruttivendoli*), minor civil servants, and other workers and tradesmen. The sons of nobles and original citizens studied elsewhere. The median age of the students was eight years and ten months, which probably meant that almost all the students were between the ages of six and 12. Thus, the state *sestieri* schools became free elementary schools for a larger, but still small, fraction of the non-elite population. The Republic saw this as an act of charity; it never articulated an obligation to educate all its subjects. Nevertheless, Venice had as large a system of state schools

⁴⁵ “Furono verso il 1550 introdotte nella città [Venice] le caritatevoli scuole de’ PP. Gesuiti, maestri sommi dell’insegnare inutilità con pompose apparenze”; Gasparo Gozzi, *Scritti di Gasparo Gozzi*, ed. Niccolo Tommaseo, 3 vols (Florence, 1849), 2:307, from his “Sulla riforma degli studi,” dated 12 August 1770. Gozzi’s six tracts on education are found in *ibid.*, 2:297–396. Two of Gozzi’s treatises of 1770 on educational reform, including the above one, are found in Gozzi, *Scritti scelti*, ed. Nicola Mangini (Turin, 1960), pp. 753–93. However, this edition omits the phrase “maestri . . . apparenze” (p. 766). For analysis of Gozzi’s educational ideas, see Bruno Rosada, “Gaspere Gozzi tra morale e pedagogia,” in *Gasparo Gozzi. Il lavoro di un intellettuale nel Settecento veneziano*, Atti del convegno (Venezia/Pordenone, 4–6 dicembre 1986), ed. Ilaria Crotti and Ricciarda Ricorda (Padua, 1989), p. 88. See also Piero Del Negro, “Gaspere Gozzi e la politica veneziana,” in Crotti and Ricorda, eds., *Gasparo Gozzi. Il lavoro di un intellettuale nel Settecento veneziano*, pp. 45–63.

as could be found anywhere in Italy at this time. Many towns in the *terraferma* followed the lead of Venice.⁴⁶

Other reforms came one after another. The Scuola di San Marco, founded in 1446, was still in existence and now included law lectures. In 1769 the government ordered these lectures to be delivered in Italian rather than in Latin.⁴⁷ Next, the patriarchal *sestieri* clerical schools that educated future secular clergymen came under state control, received state funding, and were expanded. In 1775 the Republic added two upper-level clerical schools, one on each side of the Grand Canal, with four masters each; they taught sacred eloquence, logic and metaphysics, dogmatic theology, and moral theology. These four new classes nearly replicated the curriculum of rhetoric, logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, Scholastic theology, and moral theology that Jesuit upper schools taught. In 1785 the five patriarchal *sestieri* lower schools had ten instructors teaching grammar and the humanities, plus the two upper schools with eight teachers. However, in a startling reversal, the Venetian government in 1797 suppressed all the patriarchal clerical schools on the grounds that they fomented ignorance, frivolity, and superstition. The Austrian government that took control of the Republic in 1798 did not revive them.⁴⁸

In the mid 18th century the Jesuits finally had a flourishing school in Venice. Located at the Fondamenta Nuove, it had a lower school with four teachers, two for Latin grammar and beginning Latin prose, and two for humanities and rhetoric. The upper school had five teachers: two for a combination of logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics, plus single teachers of mathematics, theology, and casuistry.⁴⁹ In 1773 the Jesuit school enrolled about 200 students, the vast majority sons of commoners, a few from the citizen class, and possibly a tiny handful of nobles.⁵⁰ The Jesuit schools in Belluno, Brescia, Padua, Verona, and Vicenza were smaller.⁵¹ Then the papacy suppressed the Society of Jesus on 21 July 1773. The schools closed, and the state seized Jesuit churches, buildings, and properties throughout the state.

The Republic replaced the Jesuit school in Venice with a state school whose classes met in the same building. It began in 1774 with 19 teachers

⁴⁶ Gullino, "Educazione," pp. 778–82; see also Gullino, *La politica scolastica*, pp. 80–93.

⁴⁷ Gullino, "Educazione," p. 797, col. 2, n. 42.

⁴⁸ Gullino, "Educazione," pp. 775–77; Gullino, *La politica scolastica*, pp. 95–105.

⁴⁹ Brizzi, "Scuole," p. 510.

⁵⁰ Gullino, "Educazione," p. 750.

⁵¹ Brizzi, "Scuole," p. 510.

(ten in the lower school and nine in the upper school), all secular clergymen receiving good salaries. The curriculum looked very much like the Jesuit curriculum, with the addition of lectures in law. Enrollment was 234 students in 1774, which grew to nearly 400 in 1796, at which time the school had 21 teachers, including two to teach *disegno* (probably commercial drafting) and one for medicine. The Senate promoted integration with the University of Padua by allowing a limited number of students to count two years of study at the Fondamenta Nuove school toward the required number of years of study for law and medicine degrees at the university.⁵²

One of the justifications for the seizure of church lands was to provide for the education of the nobility, obviously the poor nobility, because wealthy nobles had no need of financial assistance. A boarding school for poor noble boys founded in 1619 and located on the Giudecca, was the chosen institution. In the early 1780s the government increased the number of boarders from 46 to 60, confirmed the Somaschans as teachers, added a lay administrator, and slightly modified the curriculum.⁵³ But that is all that the government did for the education of noble boys. The state also promoted practical training through the establishment of specialized schools. For example, in 1739 *La Serenissima* founded the first navigation school in its history. The school initially enrolled 18 boys at the age of 14. After two years of classroom study, they spent four years on a ship and finished by taking examinations to acquire pilot licenses.⁵⁴

Despite the expansion of state schools, the majority of students still attended independent schools, as they had in the 16th century. There were 291 independent masters teaching about 2536 pupils, practically all boys, in 1787.⁵⁵ And enrollment figures for various schools in 1787 permit a rough estimate of male schooling rates and literacy. About 1600 boys studied in schools directed and funded by the state. They included the school at the Fondamenta Nuove, lay *sestieri* schools, clerical *sestieri* schools, the two Venetian seminaries for the secular clergy, the Scuola di San Marco, the school for nobles, and the navigation school. Another 2536 students, almost all boys, studied in independent schools. Hence, about

⁵² Gullino, "Educazione," pp. 770–74, 791–92, 797 n. 42; Gullino, *La politica scolastica*, p. 59.

⁵³ The basic study, not yet superseded, is Luigi Zenoni, *Per la Storia della Cultura in Venezia dal 1500 al 1797. L'Accademia dei Nobili alla Giudecca (1619–1797)* (Venice, 1916). See also Gullino, "Educazione," pp. 749, 763–64.

⁵⁴ Gullino, "Educazione," pp. 754–57, 784.

⁵⁵ Gullino, "Educazione," p. 783; Gullino, *La politica scolastica*, p. 115.

4200 boys and a handful of girls were enrolled in formal schools in 1787, when the population of the city was about 140,000.⁵⁶ As noted earlier, about 4625 boys attended formal schools in the academic year 1587–88, when the population of Venice was about 146,600. The formal schooling rate in 1587–88 was about 26 per cent for school-age boys and the male literacy rate probably 33 per cent or a little higher. It appears that the schooling rate for boys and the male literacy rate was about the same or slightly lower in 1787. In addition, the vast majority of the boys received only elementary educations in 1787, as was the case in the 16th century. Very few girls attended formal schools outside the home in 1787, again as in 1587–88.

The educational reforms of the 1770s did not produce great change. The state, aided by the papal suppression of the Society of Jesus, largely expelled the regular clergy from the classroom. It substituted a state school for the Jesuit school and took control of the clerical *sestieri* schools. But it appointed secular clergymen to replace Jesuit schoolmasters and to teach in the clerical *sestieri* schools. The majority of the independent teachers were also secular clergymen, as many were in the 16th century, and may have been in the intervening centuries. The Republic decreed that the vernacular would be the language of instruction, and it wanted schools to teach utilitarian skills. Nevertheless, even the state schools continued to teach Latin grammar and prose, Greek, philosophy, and even theology.

Terraferma towns followed the lead of Venice. For example, when the Jesuits were suppressed, the communal government of Brescia took ownership of the building that housed the Jesuit school and turned it into a communal school. In Verona the commune did the same and hired former

⁵⁶ The total comes from the figures provided by Gullino, "Educazione." There were 2536 boys (and a handful of girls) in independent schools in 1787 (p. 783). There were 312 boys in the state Fondamenta Nuove school in 1788 (p. 772, Table 1). There were 761 boys in the state *sestieri* schools in 1787 (p. 780, Table 3.) And although Gullino does not give total enrollment figures for the clerical *sestieri* schools, there were 129 boys in the two upper-level clerical schools in 1795 (p. 776). In addition, there were 60 boys in the patriarchal seminary at Murano in the 1780s (p. 776). If one estimates that there were another 40 boys in the other seminary, and at least another 170 boys in the lower level clerical *sestieri* schools, that produces a total of 400 students. One may add another 100 boys for the 60 boys in the boarding school for nobles (p. 764), 18 in the navigation school, and an unknown number of boys in the Scuola di San Marco. That makes a total male school population of 4109 (2536 + 312 + 761 + 400 + 100). Of course, this is only an estimate.

Jesuits to teach in it. However, independent masters continued to dominate Brescian education and may have done the same in Verona.⁵⁷

This is the outline of Venetian pre-university education over four centuries. There are few substantial disagreements or differences in interpretation, because there are relatively few studies. Much remains to be learned about the Catholic Reformation religious order schools in Venice, notably those of the Somaschans, as well as those of the medieval religious orders. Practically nothing is known about the state *sestieri* schools in the years between the late 16th century and the late 18th. The same is true for the Scuola di San Marco. And as noted earlier, the vernacular literature and *abbaco* schools and their curricula have been largely ignored. Above all, there is a large question that may be nearly impossible to answer: what did students take from school into life?

Jewish Schooling

There is very little information about the education of linguistic and religious minorities. The Jews are an example. The only quantitative data about teachers in the Venetian ghetto comes from a 1797 census. It listed eight male school teachers and six female teachers among the 1626 inhabitants but offered no information about their pupils and what they taught.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, bits of information from earlier centuries suggest the pattern of Jewish schooling.

It is likely that Venetian Jews relied chiefly on independent masters, men and a handful of women, from the 16th century onward. While associations may have sponsored some schools, the government of the Jewish community did not, so far as is known. Teachers taught both Hebrew and Italian grammar and reading at the elementary level, and most boys probably left school at the age of about 13. Those wishing to pursue advanced training in Hebrew studies had to find a rabbi or scholar to teach them. A proposal in 1604 to establish an advanced talmudic academy in Conegliano

⁵⁷ For Brescia, see Agosti, "La tradizione pedagogica," pp. 326–27, 331–33; for Verona see Marchi, "Istituzioni scolastiche," p. 55; and Orlandi, "Scuole ecclesiastiche," p. 294.

⁵⁸ Marino Berengo, "Gli ebrei veneziani alla fine del Settecento," in *Italia judaica. Gli ebrei in Italia dalla segregazione alla prima emancipazione*, Atti del III Convegno internazionale, Tel Aviv, 15–20 giugno 1986 (Rome, 1989), pp. 9–30, p. 12. Although Gino Luzzatto first discovered this census, his account is brief and differs somewhat from Berengo's fuller account. Luzzatto, "Un'anagrafe degli ebrei di Venezia del settembre 1797," in *Scritti in memoria di Sally Mayer (1875–1953), saggi sull'ebraismo italiano* (Jerusalem/Milan, 1956), pp. 194–98.

on the mainland did not come to pass. In contrast, Jewish boys in Verona received subsidies enabling them to continue their studies until the age of 16 or 18.⁵⁹

A small number of Jews received instruction in the Latin classics, plus logic and philosophy based on Aristotle, thus enabling them to study medicine in universities. These youths were probably mostly sons of wealthy families who provided tutors. Other ways of assisting these students were proposed. In 1564 a Jewish scholar from Mantua wanted to establish a boarding school in Mantua that would teach traditional Hebrew biblical and talmudic studies, as well as the humanistic curriculum, plus logic and philosophy based on Aristotle needed for university studies. He argued that future Jewish physicians should become acquainted with Latin philosophical and scientific material at an early age so that they could obtain university medical degrees more quickly and "not waste . . . days and years in a university among Christians in sinful neglect of Jewish studies."⁶⁰ Contributions from wealthy Jews from across northern Italy would support the boarding school. His idea did not become reality.

The proposed boarding school pointed to a major educational phenomenon. At least 350 Jews from all over Europe studied at the University of Padua and obtained medical doctorates there between 1500 and 1800.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Howard Adelman, "Another *More nevu'khim*: The Italian Background and the Education Program of Leon Modena's *More nevu'khim bikhtivah bilshonenu hakadosh*," in Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Nahum M. Sarna, eds., *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding. Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, 4 vols (Atlanta, 1989), vol. 3: *Judaism in the Middle Ages: Philosophers, Hasidism, Messianism in Modern Times, The Modern Age: Philosophy*, pp. 91–98.

⁶⁰ As translated from the Hebrew by Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book: 315–1791*, rev. ed., intro., updated biblio. by Marc Saperstein (Cincinnati, 1999), pp. 438–46, quote at p. 442.

⁶¹ David B. Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven/London, 1995), pp. 100–17, with much additional bibliography. A word of explanation about how Jews and other non-Catholics obtained doctorates during the era of the Counter Reformation is necessary. In 1565 the Venetian state implemented a papal bull mandating that all graduates profess their Catholic faith before receiving degrees from the college of doctors of arts and medicine of the University of Padua. However, in 1616 the Republic created a second college of doctors of arts and medicine, usually called the Collegio Veneto, with the power to award degrees without requiring the oath. In addition, counts palatine (a hereditary title with certain powers that popes and emperors granted to learned, and some not-so-learned, men) possessed the power to confer the doctorate without requiring a profession of faith both before and after 1565. Hence, many counts palatine, some of them Jews, were available to confer degrees. Moreover, both Collegio Veneto and count palatine doctorates were less expensive than the traditional doctorate, making them even more popular. For more information and bibliography, see Grendler, *Universities*, pp. 180–86, 506–08.

The figure does not include those who studied at Padua and obtained degrees elsewhere, or who studied at Padua without obtaining degrees but still practiced medicine. Some of these Jewish medical students came from Venice and the Veneto, which meant that they studied Latin and other subjects.

Like Christian girls and women, probably only a small number of Jewish girls and women received limited formal educations, usually at home from tutors or family members. But there were exceptions. Some Jewish women learned enough Hebrew to be employed in Hebrew publishing.⁶² And there is the remarkable example of Sarra Copia Sulam (1600?–41). A Venetian Jewess married to a wealthy merchant, she spoke and/or read Hebrew, Italian, Venetian, Spanish, French, and possibly Latin. She presided over a salon of learned men that included Venetian nobles; she corresponded with Christian intellectuals from other parts of Italy; she wrote Italian poetry; and she discussed Aristotelian philosophical issues.⁶³ Copia Sulam was a Jewish counterpart to Moderata Fonte, Lucrezia Marinella, and Arcangela Tarabotti.

Conclusion

The fact that Venetian pre-university schooling changed little over 200 years suggests that education reflected Venetian values. The Most Serene Republic stood on political, social, and institutional foundations that changed little over a thousand years, while the myth of Venice promoted the ideology of an unchanging constitutional state. Its gerontocratic political system rewarded cautious, long-lived officeholders. The continuity of Venetian education also expressed the character of the Venetian Republic.

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⁶² Howard Adelman, "The Literacy of Jewish Women in Early Modern Italy," in Barbara J. Whitehead, ed., *Women's Education in Early Modern Europe. A History, 1500–1800* (New York/London, 1999), pp. 133–58, at p. 134.

⁶³ Sarra Copia Sulam, *Jewish Poet and Intellectual in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Works of Sarra Copia Sulam in Verse and Prose, along with Writings of Her Contemporaries in Her Praise, Condemnation, or Defense*, ed. and trans. by Don Harrán (Chicago, 2009).

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SCIENCE AND MEDICINE IN EARLY MODERN VENICE

William Eamon

In 1400, Venetians saw their world as a compact, bounded, and ordered space. Their intellectuals knew, as did scholars elsewhere in Europe, that the universe described in the books they read in the university was the universe that actually existed. Venice itself was an enclave protected by the sea, and for most Venetians, the world beyond the lagoon was unfamiliar, or known only by the foreigner merchants who visited the city to trade, or perhaps by reading the Venetian merchant Marco Polo's much-embellished account of his travels in Central Asia.¹

By the end of the century, Venetians saw that intimate and familiar world splitting apart. The discovery of new worlds beyond the oceans revealed that they occupied only a tiny corner of the known world, now expanded by tens of thousands of miles. Soon a new cosmology came into being, one whose center was not the earth, humankind's abode, but the sun, around which the earth and the planets revolved.

Other changes were afoot as well. A commercial revolution had thrust Italy squarely into the global economy; with considerable justification, Venetians saw their city as being at the center of it. A new world of goods gave rise to new ways of knowing, methods having to do with experience and experiment rather than textual hermeneutics.² Nature would be discovered not merely in books, intellectuals confidently asserted, but by manipulating the world using the techniques supplied by navigators, alchemists, and craftsmen.³ By 1600, no one but the most diehard conservative would have believed that all important truths could be found in books, or that the ancients knew all there was to know.

¹ On Renaissance Venetians' sense of space, see Alberto Tenenti, "The Sense of Time and Space in the Venetian World of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in J. R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 17–46. Recently, historians and archeologists have challenged whether Polo went to China at all. See, for example, Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* (Boulder, 1998).

² Harold Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, 2007).

³ Paolo Rossi, *Philosophy, Technology, and the Arts in the Early Modern Era*, trans. S. Attansio (New York, 1970).

The Power of Tradition

In the Renaissance, the authority of tradition manifested itself in the strength of the universities, in the Church, and above all in the humanist movement, which aimed to retrieve ancient knowledge in its pure form, unadulterated by scholastic commentary. In Venice, as elsewhere in Europe, the Renaissance was an age of both intellectual conservatism and dynamic innovation. Nowhere was the power of tradition and the shock of the new more evident than in the understanding of the natural world.

The humanist movement in Quattrocento Venice centered around a group of highly cultivated young patricians who regarded literary activity as a form of public service.⁴ The Venetian humanists looked back to the example of Petrarch, who, a century earlier, from his opulent palace on the Riva degli Schiavoni, polemicized against the “sophistry of the moderns” and committed himself to a program of rediscovering the ancient philosophers in their own words, recovered in long-neglected manuscripts rather than through scholastic commentaries.

Venice played an important role in the recovery of the ancient legacy, especially the classical scientific tradition.⁵ Venetian humanism’s civic orientation channeled its energies into practical pursuits and instilled a conviction that the study of nature could not be divorced from the study of humanity.⁶ Venetian humanists—including many foreigners attracted by the city’s libraries and printing industry—were avid collectors of classical texts. The city’s printers, above all Aldus Manutius (1449–1515), who had immigrated to Venice from Carpi in 1494, were admired throughout Europe for producing Greek texts of the highest quality.⁷

The Mathematical Renaissance

It was largely through the efforts of the Greek cardinal Bessarion (1403–72), who immigrated to Italy in 1439, that Greek studies became the focus

⁴ Vittore Branca, “Ermolao Barbaro and Late Quattrocento Venetian Humanism,” in J. R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 218–43. In addition, see Felix Gilbert, “Humanism in Venice,” in Villa I Tatti, *Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations*, 2 vols (Florence, 1976), 1:13–26.

⁵ Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton, 1986), p. 6.

⁶ Branca, “Ermolao Barbaro,” p. 237.

⁷ On Manutius, see Martin Lowry, *World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1979).

of interest among Italian humanists.⁸ A few years before his death in 1472, Bessarion donated his immense collection of Greek and Latin manuscripts to the Venetian Republic.⁹ Transferred to Venice in 1472, the collection became the nucleus of the Biblioteca Marciana.

As a Platonist, Bessarion naturally had an interest in mathematics, and his library held an extensive collection of Greek mathematical works. He owned codices containing treatises by Archimedes, Appollonius, Hero, and Aristarchus, along with an extensive collection of works by Euclid. With the exception of Pappus, Bessarion's library contained every major classical source for the humanist revival of mathematics.

Other important private libraries also made their way to Venice. The prominent humanist Giorgio Valla of Piacenza (1447–1500), who moved to Venice in 1485 to become a public teacher of mathematics, brought with him an extensive collection of mathematical works that included Latin translations of Aristarchus, Archimedes, and Hero as well as commentaries on Euclid. Valla wrote a massive humanistic compendium of classical opinions on the relationship between mathematics and philosophy, *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus* (1501). Compiled largely from fresh translations and paraphrases of Greek mathematical writings, it was the chief reference work on ancient mathematics and served as an important resource for Renaissance scientists, including the astronomer Copernicus, who mined it extensively.

The rich collections of mathematical works in private and public Venetian libraries served as sources for a humanistic renaissance of mathematics.¹⁰ In 1503, the Neapolitan Luca Guarico published at Venice his *Tetragonismus*, comprising the first printed Latin texts of Archimedes, while Fra Giovanni Giocondo, a classical scholar and architect from Verona who came to Venice in 1506 to serve as a military engineer to the Republic, edited mathematical texts for the Aldine press.¹¹

The humanist revival of classical mathematics also expressed itself in public lectures on Euclid, Archimedes, and other masters. In 1508, Luca

⁸ Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, 3 vols (Aalen/Paderborn, 1923–42; repr. Aachen: Scientia-Verlag, 1967), vol. 3: *Aus Bessarions Gelehrtenkreis*, pp. 1923–42; L. Labowsky, "Bessarione," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 9 (Rome, 1967), pp. 686–96.

⁹ Paul Lawrence Rose, *The Italian Renaissance of Mathematics: Studies on Humanists and Mathematicians from Petrarch to Galileo* (Geneva, 1975).

¹⁰ See, in general, Rose, *Italian Renaissance of Mathematics*.

¹¹ Giocondo designed the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (1508), which was decorated by Titian and Giorgione.

Pacioli lectured on Euclid in the church of San Bartolomeo to an overflow crowd that included Aldus Manutius, Marin Sanudo (Marino Sanuto), and Giacondo.¹² In 1530, the Venetian Senate established a public chair of mathematics, appointing the influential patrician Giovanni Battista Memmo as its first professor.

Mechanics

The Venetian approach to mathematics was characterized by a steadfast concern with the application of mathematics to physical problems—a reflection of the government's tendency to support practical scientific projects more readily than theoretical ones.¹³ Thus, one finds in Venetian humanist circles an avid interest in the study of mechanics, which was always regarded as a mixed mathematical-physical science. That entire tradition, virtually, had its roots in the rediscovery and publication of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanical Problems* (*Mechanica problemata*).¹⁴

It is customary to think that the origins of modern science lay in a revolt against the authority of Aristotle and the Scholastics. Such an interpretation, while true in the long run, overshadows the robust Aristotelian tradition that humanists themselves advanced. Bessarion's manuscript of the Aristotelian corpus became the basis for the Aldine *editio princeps* of the complete works of Aristotle, published in Venice in four volumes in 1495–98. The *Mechanical Problems* was part of that edition, making it widely accessible.¹⁵

Mechanical Problems consists of a theoretical introduction and a discussion of 35 problems in statics and dynamics. According to the introduction, the work intended to explain “marvels” that occur against nature (*praeter naturam*) but are produced in accordance with nature's laws. The “problems” included questions such as: Why small forces can move great weights by means of a lever, why rowers in the middle of ships contribute most to their movement, and so on. Such topics, all with practical

¹² Lowry, *World of Aldus Manutius*, p. 137.

¹³ Many of the texts relating to the Italian renaissance of mechanics may be accessed online through the Archimedes Project: http://archimedes2.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/archimedes_templates.

¹⁴ *Mechanica problemata*, also known as *De mechanica*, was a work not by Aristotle but more likely by his student Strato.

¹⁵ On *De mechanica* in the Renaissance, see Paul Lawrence Rose and Stillman Drake, “The Pseudo-Aristotelian Questions of Mechanics in Renaissance Culture,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 18 (1971), 65–104.

applications, were precisely the kinds of mechanical problems that the Venetian patricians were interested in solving.

The *Mechanical Problems* was widely discussed in Venetian humanist circles and was the subject of a flurry of translations, probably inspired by the urgent technological tasks that confronted state officials. The Venetian humanist Vittore Fausto (1480–1551?), who headed an Arsenal crew in building experimental ships, made the first Latin translation of the work, publishing the result in 1517.¹⁶ Fausto's translation (later supplanted by an edition published in 1525 by another Venetian, Niccolò Leonico Tomeo) provided the theoretical basis for a much larger project: to use humanist research to renew Venice's shipbuilding methods. Fausto's far-reaching engineering projects were among the first Renaissance attempts to apply geometric principles to shipbuilding.¹⁷

Venetian humanism was thus distinct from the humanistic traditions of other Italian city-states in that it made practical demands on philosophy, requiring that theoretical knowledge help solve technical problems. In Venice, a flourishing book trade, a highly developed commercial mathematics tradition, and a famous Arsenal that brought together a multitude of crafts in one location all intersected with pragmatic patrician interests to create a demand for a useful literary and scientific heritage.

Niccolò Tartaglia and the Science of Ballistics

Venice's utilitarian approach to scholarship was nowhere more evident than in the application of mathematics to the understanding and management of gunpowder artillery. Niccolò Tartaglia, a self-educated practical mathematician (*maestro d'abbaco*) who taught at a public school in the church of San Giovanni e Paolo, was the first person to advance the idea that the mathematical study of gunshot could yield a science.¹⁸ Born in Brescia, Tartaglia spent most of his professional life in Venice, where, working closely with printers, he produced Italian editions of Euclid—the first published translation of the *Elements* in any vernacular

¹⁶ Rose and Drake, "Pseudo-Aristotelian Questions," pp. 77–78; Mary J. Henninger-Voss, "How the 'New Science' of Cannons Shook up the Aristotelian Cosmos," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63 (2002), 380.

¹⁷ On Vettor Fausto's activity at the Arsenale, see Ennio Concina, "Humanism on the Sea," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 3 (1988), 159–65.

¹⁸ There is a large literature on Tartaglia, well summarized in Henninger-Voss, "The 'New Science' of Cannons."

language—and Archimedes. He also composed two original treatises on artillery, *Nova Scientia* [New Science; 1537] and *Quesiti et inventioni diverse* (1546). Tartaglia brought the world of the bombardier into the domain of the philosophers, and by doing so not only codified gunners' practices but also unwittingly contributed to the reconstruction of natural philosophy.

Tartaglia's stated purpose in writing the *Nova Scientia* was to "give rules to the art of bombardiers."¹⁹ Cast in the form of a dialogue with "a very expert bombardier," the work begins as a reflection on the question: At what inclination would an artillery piece fire the longest shot? Using geometry, Tartaglia proved that a ball shot at 45 degrees maximizes the product of the two motions and travels the furthest of any elevation. More important, he recognized that cannons did not have to be tested at all elevations or at all charges; instead, their trajectories could be geometrically reproduced on the page by compasses. By putting gunshot on a predictive, mathematical basis, Tartaglia challenged the Aristotelian picture, giving the problem of projectile motion a new urgency. In the hands of scientists such as Galileo, the physics of projectiles provided a lever by which the entire edifice of the Aristotelian universe could be pulled down.

As a mediator between the world of the bombardier and that of the scholar and administrator, Tartaglia illustrates the convergence of scholars and craftsmen that historians have identified as being crucial to the birth of experimental science. In a series of articles published in the 1940s, Edgar Zilsel argued that modern science was born from the union of academic learning and the practical activities of artisans. According to Zilsel, a Marxist, craftsmen "were the real pioneers of empirical observation, experimentation, and causal research."²⁰ Building upon Zilsel, Paolo Rossi argued that a radically new appraisal of labor and technical knowledge appears in the writings of 16th-century humanists and engineers.²¹ Rejecting the classical valuation of the mechanical arts as impure and base, humanists praised the arts for their dignity and usefulness and insisted that they were necessary subjects in the philosopher's curriculum. More recently, Pamela Smith has offered a new spin on the Zilsel thesis. Like Zilsel and Rossi, Smith argues that the "new philosophy" of the 17th century depended crucially upon the entry into the knowledge-making process of

¹⁹ For a partial English translation, see Stillman Drake and I. E. Drabkin, *Mechanics in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Madison, 1969), here quoting p. 68.

²⁰ Edgar Zilsel, "Sociological Roots of Science," *American Journal of Sociology* 47 (1941–42), 551.

²¹ Rossi, *Philosophy, Technology, and the Arts*, ch. 1.

an entirely new group of people, artisans and practitioners, whose work had formerly been kept isolated from the natural-philosophical tradition by an ideology of classicism which created a fundamental division between nature and art. Central to the artisanal epistemology, Smith argues, is the idea that knowledge of nature is gained by a “bodily encounter” with matter in the act of making. Knowledge is to be gained not from books but by manual labor.²²

Venice provided ample opportunities for interactions among scholars, merchants, and artisans. Walking along the Merceria, the busy commercial street connecting Piazza San Marco with the Rialto, Venetians would pass shops of metalworkers, tailors, clockmakers, jewelers, hatters, and perfumers and could watch them ply their trades and converse with them. Venice’s craftsmen were renowned for their precision workmanship, and the city’s Arsenal, an immense shipbuilding factory, encompassed nearly all the mechanical arts, from carpentry to metallurgy and from glassmaking to cannonry.²³

Galileo, who served as a state consultant to the Arsenal, spent many hours walking through the great shipyard observing its craftsmen at work. Galileo’s theory of motion was rooted in the practical knowledge on ballistics accumulated by contemporary experts on artillery. The empirical roots of the first of his two “new sciences,” dealing with the strength of materials, drew directly from his observations of the practical challenges of constructing large galleys faced by the foremen of the Arsenal. At the beginning of the *Discourses on the Two New Sciences* (1638), Galileo, speaking through interlocutor Filippo Salviati, observed:

Frequent experience of your famous arsenal, my Venetian friends, seems to me to open a large field to speculative minds for philosophizing, and particularly in that area which is called mechanics, inasmuch as every sort of instrument and machine is continually put in operation there. And among its great number of artisans there must be some who, through observations handed down by their predecessors as well as those which they attentively and continually make for themselves, are truly expert and whose reasoning is of the finest.²⁴

²² Pamela Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago, 2006).

²³ Ennio Concina, *L'Arsenale della Repubblica di Venezia: Tecniche e istituzioni dal medioevo all'età moderna* (Milan, 1984).

²⁴ Galileo Galilei, *Two New Sciences*, trans. Stillman Drake (Madison, 1974), p. 49.

Humanism and Medicine: Tradition and Innovation

While mathematics and mechanics dominated humanistic scientific activity in Venice, the presence of a distinguished medical faculty at the University of Padua meant that the Republic could also boast a galaxy of medical humanists. Galen still reigned supreme at Padua (as elsewhere in Italy), despite challenges to his teachings from anatomists, disciples of the Swiss medical reformer Paracelsus, and other medical innovators. Academic Galenists were notoriously suspicious of philosophical innovations and held in disdain almost any medical theory or practice that threatened their entrenched interests.

Medical humanists launched a particularly hostile attack on the powerful influence of the *Canon* of the eleventh-century Arabic philosopher Ibn Sina, known to the Latins as Avicenna (d. 1037), which had gained a strong foothold in the medical curriculum of the universities.²⁵ Although the attack on Avicenna had begun in the late Middle Ages, the accessibility of Greek medical works in the original gave humanists new tools by which to identify specific errors in the Arabic tradition. Padua, generally regarded as the best medical school in Europe, stood at the forefront of the 16th-century movement to replace Avicenna with a "pure" ancient legacy.

Giovanni Battista da Monte (1489–1551), a professor of practical medicine at Padua, was one of the most outspoken critics of Avicenna. The leading architect of the definitive Giunti Latin edition of Galen (1541), da Monte introduced clinical medicine into Padua curriculum and was one of the main proponents of establishing a botanical garden at the university.²⁶ Vettore Trincavella (1496–1568), another leading professor at Padua, produced what is generally considered the best collection of Latin texts of Galen ever published in the Renaissance.²⁷

Venice itself also boasted important medical humanists, including many who were not part of the faculty at Padua. Although Ermolao Barbaro (1454–93) was not a physician, in 1481 he made a Latin translation of Dioscorides's (fl. A.D. 50–70) *De materia medica*, the most comprehensive

²⁵ Nancy Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy: The Canon and Medical Teaching in Italian Universities after 1500* (Princeton, 1987).

²⁶ Jerome J. Bylebyl, "The School of Padua: Humanistic Medicine in the Sixteenth Century," in Charles Webster, ed., *Health, Medicine, and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 346.

²⁷ Martin Sicherl, *Die griechischen Erstausgaben des Vettore Trincavelli* (Paderborn, 1993).

guide to medicinal plants produced in antiquity, a work consulted by physicians for the next 1500 years. Barbaro's Latin edition served physicians until the first Greek edition of Dioscorides was published by Aldus Manutius.

Alessandro Benedetti (1445–1525), a native of Verona, spent most of his career as a medical practitioner in Venice and taught medicine there, although he was evidently never on the faculty at Padua.²⁸ Benedetti's *Anatomice* (1502) reflects not university teaching but the civic and humanist environment of Venice in the 1480s and 1490s.²⁹ Repudiating Arabo-Latin scholastic medicine, Benedetti abandoned the scholastic style of presentation characteristic of the medieval works on anatomy and sought to develop a medical terminology based on ancient authors, often by transliterating Greek terms. At the same time, he relied on his record of personal experience both as a dissector and medical practitioner, and he insisted on the importance of dissection for both physicians and surgeons.

The Anatomical Revolution

Although the humanists denounced “innovators” such as Avicenna and the Paracelsians, in fact they supported some of the most important medical novelties of the day. Among these was a reform of anatomy that took place at the University of Padua and spread to the rest of Italy and Europe. Its leader was a young anatomy professor from Belgium named Andreas Vesalius (1515–64). Although human dissection had been practiced at Padua since the early 14th century, previously surgeons carried out the anatomical demonstrations to accompany lectures by professors of anatomy.³⁰ Vesalius, however, insisted upon doing the dissection of cadavers himself and maintained that anatomy could not be learned simply by reading Galen but required direct observation of the opened

²⁸ Giovanna Ferrari, *L'esperienza del passato: Alessandro Benedetti, filologo e medico umanista* (Florence, 1996).

²⁹ Alessandro Benedetti, *Historia corporis humani sive Anatomice*, ed. Giovanna Ferrari (Rome, 1998).

³⁰ On public anatomies, see Giovanna Ferrari, “Public Anatomy Lessons and the Carnival: The Anatomy Theatre of Bologna,” *Past and Present* 117 (1987), 51–106; Andrea Carlino, *Books of the Body: Anatomical Ritual and Renaissance Learning*, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne C. Tedeschi (Chicago, 1999).

human body. He criticized Galen on numerous points, although he did not abandon Galenic theory altogether.

In 1543, Vesalius published his monumental *De humanis corporis fabrica* [On the Fabric of the Human Body] (Fig. 19.1). Sumptuously illustrated with exacting drawings made directly from Vesalius's own dissections and published in a folio edition by Johannes Oporinus in Basel, *De fabrica* was like no other anatomy book ever produced. The dissected cadavers, set up in idealized classical poses resembling Greek sculptures, display the organs of the human body with a realism and precision never before attained.³¹

Although revolution-making, *De fabrica* was hardly revolutionary. Rather, it fell squarely within the scholarly tradition of Renaissance humanism. Vesalius was one of the scholars collaborating on the new Giunti edition of Galen's oeuvre that appeared in 1541. In the preface to *De fabrica*, he bemoaned the decline of medicine since antiquity. In writing his book, he explained, he wanted anatomy to be "recalled from the region of the dead," so that one might "assert without shame that the present science of anatomy is comparable to that of the ancients and that in our age nothing has been so degraded and then wholly restored as anatomy."³² While acknowledging the errors in Galen's anatomical writings, Vesalius was not interested in undermining the Galenic medical system. Indeed, he upheld the ancient physician as a model to be emulated.

Vesalius left Padua soon after the publication of *De fabrica* to become a personal physician to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. His successors continued his work and brought the anatomical revolution to fruition.³³ Realdo Colombo (c.1516–59), who succeeded Vesalius as professor of anatomy, corrected several of Vesalius's errors in his *De re anatomica* (1559), a work that catapulted him to the papal court. Gabriele Falloppio (1523–62) and Girolamo Fabrici (Hieronymus Fabricius of Aquapendente, 1533–1619), who in turn succeeded Colombo, furthered Vesalius's approach, making anatomy a rigorous science distinct from any practical medical use to which it might be put. Fabricius, in particular, connected the study of anatomy to natural philosophy, developing a research program addressing the Aristotelian topics of motion, sensation, digestion,

³¹ On Vesalius and his book, see C. D. O'Malley, *Andreas Vesalius of Brussels, 1514–1564* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1964).

³² Quoted in O'Malley, *Andreas Vesalius*, p. 320.

³³ Cynthia Klestinec, *Theaters of Anatomy. Students, Teachers, and Traditions of Dissection in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2011).

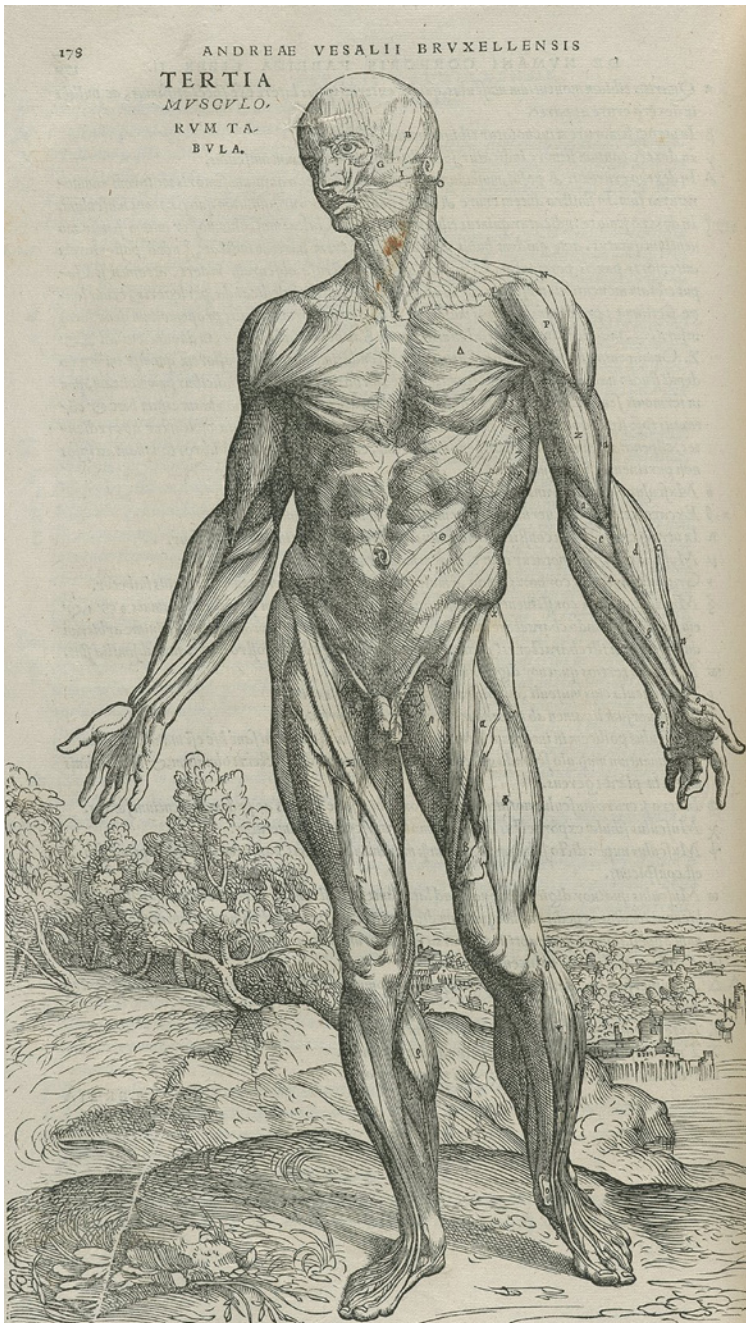


Figure 19.1. A plate from Andreas Vesalius's *De fabrica* (1543), showing an engraving of the musculature on a male figure. Courtesy of the National Library of Medicine.

respiration, and generation. Building the annual public demonstration at the university around his "Aristotle project," he used the public forum to explore the connections between anatomy and natural philosophy and to produce a systematic study of the parts of the animals based on their biological function. Eventually, the popularity among students of anatomical dissections led to the construction of permanent anatomical theaters at Padua, the first built in 1584 and the second in 1594.³⁴

This was the Padua anatomical tradition that the English physician William Harvey (1578–1657) encountered when he arrived in 1598 to study with Fabricius, who was then at the height of his power and influence. After taking his medical doctorate in 1602, Harvey returned to England and took a position at St Bartholomew's Hospital, where he continued his anatomical experiments.³⁵ In 1628 he published his treatise *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus* [Anatomical Exercise on the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals], in which he demonstrated the circulation of the blood. Heavily influenced by Aristotelian philosophy, *De motu cordis* was the culmination of the Paduan anatomical tradition.

Aristotelianism at Padua

Fabricius's philosophical approach to anatomy was rooted in its Paduan environment, where a succession of philosophy teachers, from Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) to Jacopo Zabarella (1533–89), had reoriented Aristotelian natural philosophy and developed novel approaches to scientific method.³⁶ Pomponazzi began his studies at Padua in 1484 and, after receiving his degree, taught there for 20 years. During the 12 decades or so between Pomponazzi's arrival and Galileo's departure in

³⁴ Andrew Cunningham, "Fabricius and the 'Aristotle Project' in Anatomical Teaching and Research at Padua," in Andrew Wear, Roger French, and I. M. Lonie, eds., *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 195–222. In addition, see Cunningham, *Anatomical Renaissance: The Resurrection of the Anatomical Projects of the Ancients* (Aldershot, 1997).

³⁵ James G. Lennox, "The Comparative Study of Animal Development: William Harvey's Aristotelianism," in Justin E. H. Smith, ed., *The Problem of Animal Generation in Early Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 21–46.

³⁶ J. H. Randall, Jr., "The Development of Scientific Method in the School of Padua," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (1940), 177–206. For a critique of Randall's thesis of continuity between the school of Padua and modern science, see Paolo Rossi, "The Aristotelians and the 'Moderns': Hypothesis and Nature," *Annali dell'Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza di Firenze* 7 (1982), 3–28.

1610, the learned community that Shakespeare called “fair Padua, nursery of arts” achieved a distinction in scientific and medical studies unmatched anywhere in Europe. Polish astronomer Nicolas Copernicus came to Padua during Pomponazzi’s tenure, as did numerous other students seeking to learn the new approach to Aristotelian natural philosophy being taught there.

Aristotelian philosophy as developed at Padua was radical and daring for the time. Shockingly, Pompanazzi argued against the immortality of the soul. Venturing further in the direction of naturalism, he eliminated all supernatural agency from causation and denied the traditional Christian view of angels, demons, and miracles. He defended astrology and occult powers on purely naturalistic grounds, and in his controversial *De Incantationibus* [Of Incantations] he gave a purely naturalistic, causal account of talismans and other forms of magic.³⁷

Aristotelianism at Padua, aiming at explicating Aristotle without accommodating theological interests, was bold, exciting, and, to many intellectuals of the day, uplifting. Zabarella’s passion for science and logic was certainly the equal of Pomponazzi’s, and his natural-philosophical works were among the finest products of Renaissance Aristotelianism. Although he is best remembered as a logician, Zabarella also commented extensively on Aristotle’s *Physics*. The similarity between Zabarella’s works and certain questions taken up by Galileo has long been recognized, and the Paduan philosopher’s concern with scientific demonstration links him with Bacon as well.³⁸

The Shock of the New

While humanism rooted Venetian culture in the past, changes were afoot that would cause thinkers to cease to believe that all truths could be found in the writings of the ancients. Creatures of the book, educated Venetians of the Renaissance were trained to believe that what was revealed in ancient texts was infallible. The discoveries of mariners, mainly Iberian, shook those beliefs to the core. Knowledge burst the library, and intellectuals scrambled to keep up.

³⁷ On Pompanazzi’s account of magic, see D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (Notre Dame, 1975), pp. 107–111.

³⁸ Neal Ward Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York, 1963); Gilbert, “Galileo and the School of Padua,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 1 (1963), 223–31.

The event that caused these momentous changes was the European encounter with the New World. For the most part, Venetians did not participate in the oceanic discoveries except as mapmakers, armchair travelers, and disseminators of secondhand news about the Americas. A notable exception was the mysterious Venetian "Messer Codro," who is mentioned by numerous Spanish chroniclers, from Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo to Hernando de Soto.³⁹ This eccentric and adventurous explorer, who went to the New World about 1515 and died there, studied the plants and animals of Central America and is said to have discovered the properties of the balsam tree (*goaconax*). Oviedo, who knew Codro, reported that the naturalist was "very wise and experienced in the natural sciences" and that he died "in the performance of his work, like Pliny in his, investigating and looking into the secrets of nature."⁴⁰ Codro, who was buried on the island of Cebaco off the coast of Panama, left no account of his adventures, and his legacy is remembered only by the Spanish chroniclers who knew him.

Nevertheless, like all Europeans, Venetians were fascinated by the New World. Venetian writers produced numerous accounts of the voyages of others. Between 1555 and 1576, Venetian presses published 12 editions of Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias*, an important Spanish work on the natural history of the New World. Four editions of Bartolomé de las Casas's *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* were printed by Marco Ginammi between 1626 and 1643 in both Spanish and Italian versions, thus fueling interest in the "American controversy."⁴¹ Venetian printers played a leading role in disseminating news about the novel things being brought back from America and Asia.⁴²

No example better illustrates Venetians' fascination with the geographical discoveries than the passion, bordering on fanaticism, of Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485–1557), a scholar who worked as a secretary to the

³⁹ Antonello Gerbi, *Nature in the New World: From Christopher Columbus to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo*, trans. J. Moyle (Pittsburgh, 1985), pp. 198–200.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁴¹ Angela Caracciolo Aricò, "Il Nuovo Mondo e l'umanesimo: immagini e miti dell'editoria veneziana," in Aricò, ed., *L'impatto della scoperta dell'America nella cultura veneziana* (Rome, 1990).

⁴² Peter Burke, "Early Modern Venice as a Center of Information and Communication," in John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 388–419. On translations of Spanish writings on the discoveries, see Donatella Ferro, "Traduzioni di opere spagnole sulla scoperta dell'America nell'editoria veneziana del Cinquecento," in Angela Caracciolo Aricò, ed., *L'impatto della scoperta dell'America* (Rome, 1990), pp. 93–105.

Council of Ten. Though he traveled little himself, Ramusio managed to compile a massive compilation of first-hand accounts of travels to the New World, the Middle East, and Asia, *Navigazioni et Viaggi* [Navigations and Voyages], which was published in three volumes by the Giunti press between 1550 and 1559. Ramusio's great collection of travel accounts sought to include all the past literature on the voyages of discovery. It was the first work of its kind and was never superseded in the Renaissance.⁴³

Yet, for all his interest in the outside world, Ramusio's *Navigazioni* was a curiously provincial work. Against all the evidence before his eyes and clearly envious of Iberian accomplishments, Ramusio insisted that the glory of discovering new worlds went to the Italians. Enthroning Marco Polo as the king of explorers, Ramusio nostalgically longed for the day when the Republic of Venice would rightfully claim its preeminence in the world of travel and exploration. Venetians dreamt vividly, but stayed put.⁴⁴

New Worlds versus Ancient Authority

The geographical expansion of Europe shattered the Renaissance scholar's text-bound world. Prior to the discovery of the Americas, the botanical world of the Europeans was limited to the approximately 550 plants that the Greek physician Dioscorides (A.D. c.40–80) described in his *De materia medica* [Of Medical Material]. In the edition and commentary published by Piero Andrea Mattioli (1501–77), Dioscorides's herbal was, in the words of historian Paula Findlen, "probably the most well-read scientific book of the 16th century."⁴⁵ Yet the larger the world became, the more limited Dioscorides's image of nature seemed. How much of the world did the ancients really know, Europeans asked? The Mediterranean, certainly, and parts of Africa and the Middle East, but as accounts of the Indies poured into Europe in the 16th century, naturalists suddenly found themselves awash with new facts about nature.

⁴³ A modern edition is: Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, ed. Marica Milanesi, 6 vols (Turin, 1978–88).

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Horodowich, "Armchair Travelers and the Venetian Discovery of the New World," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36 (2005), 1049.

⁴⁵ Paula Findlen, "The Formation of a Scientific Community: Natural History in Sixteenth-Century Italy," in A. Grafton and N. Siraisi, eds., *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p. 373.

Although few Venetians actually traveled to the New World, Venice's cartographers produced some of the most important maps describing the overseas discoveries. It is not difficult to understand why cartography should have occupied such a significant place in Venetian culture.⁴⁶ As a major commercial center that depended for its economic life on maritime trade, Venice needed accurate, up-to-date maps and sailing charts. In addition, as a major printing center, Venice was well situated to take a leading role in disseminating the cartographic developments that were taking place as a result of the humanistic revival of Ptolemy's *Geography* and the overseas discoveries. At a time when Spain and Portugal vied for territorial domination of the New World, placing constraints upon the diffusion of information, Venice, with its enterprising printers, skilled engravers, and accomplished cartographers, emerged as the main center of map production in Europe.

Giacomo Gastaldi (c.1500–66) was 16th-century Venice's most prolific cartographer. Gastaldi began his career as an engineer for the Venetian Republic and began making maps in the 1540s.⁴⁷ Gastaldi revolutionized the technique of mapmaking. Using copperplate engraving instead of woodblock printing, he produced some of the most accurate and detailed maps of his time. His regional maps of the New World, produced for a 1548 edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*, were the most comprehensive of the day.⁴⁸

Venice as an Emporium

Even if Venice did not produce notable explorers of its own, the city's merchants enthusiastically traded in the goods brought back from distant lands. In the shops lining the Merceria, merchants sold foodstuffs, spices, textiles, jewelry, perfume, and a luxuriant array of commodities from all points of the known world, many having been shipped through Lisbon or other Iberian ports. Each day, walking along the busy street, one would have seen and smelled evidence of Venice's success as a commercial entrepôt.

⁴⁶ D. Cosgrove, "Mapping New Worlds: Culture and Cartography in Sixteenth-Century Venice," *Imago Mundi* 44 (1992), 65–89.

⁴⁷ Robert W. Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century and Their Maps: Bibliographies of the Cartographers of Abraham Ortelius, 1570* (Chicago, 1993).

⁴⁸ On Gastaldi's maps, see S. Grande, *Le carte d'America di Giacomo Gastaldi* (Turin, 1905).

One would also have seen new foodstuffs being sold in the piazzas. American plants transformed Italian diets. Although we cannot be sure when the first plate of polenta was eaten in Venice, there is ample evidence for the cultivation of maize in the Veneto, where it was destined to become a staple, by the mid-16th century.⁴⁹ The tomato took a little longer to become part of the Italian diet, and was always more popular in the South because of the Spanish influence; but by the middle of the 18th century the culinary use of tomatoes had become widespread in Italy. Other New World foodstuffs, such as the turkey, also became part of the Italian diet, transforming everyday life.⁵⁰

Articles of exotic natural history were on display not only in the streets and marketplaces but also in Venice's thriving pharmacies. A capital of the European trade in pharmaceuticals, Venice had more than 50 apothecary shops in the mid-16th century, about one for every 3000 Venetians.⁵¹ The pharmaceutical trade thrived on the novel and exotic raw material that poured into the city from distant parts of the world: crocodile skins, basilisks, bezoar, turkeys, and Egyptian mummies for making *mumia*, a prized medicine that was used for a fantastic variety of ailments.⁵²

Pharmacies were the original natural history museums. Although like other early modern cities Venice had its share of private curiosity cabinets, most were the property of patricians and were rarely open to the public.⁵³ In the apothecary shops, however, ordinary Venetians could see specimens of many of the exotic plants and animals newly discovered in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The most famous natural history collection

⁴⁹ Michele Fassina, "Il mais nel veneto nel Cinquecento: Testimonianze iconografiche e prime esperienze culturali," in Angela Caracciolo Aricò, ed., *L'impatto della scoperta dell'America* (Rome, 1990), pp. 85–92.

⁵⁰ David Gentilcore, *Pomodoro! A History of the Tomato in Italy* (New York, 2010).

⁵¹ Richard Palmer, "Pharmacy in the Republic of Venice in the Sixteenth Century," in Andrew Wear, R. K. French, and Ian M. Lonie, eds., *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 100–17.

⁵² Palmer's article on the Venetian pharmacies is still the most comprehensive study of the subject. The wares of a typical, well-stocked Venetian pharmacy are described in Prospero Borgarucci, *La fabbrica de gli spetiali* (Venice, 1567). On the drug *mumia*, see Karl H. Dannenfeldt, "Egyptian Mumia: The Sixteenth Century Experience and Debate," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 (1985), 163–80, who points out that the demand for the drug was so great that it gave rise to flourishing trade in counterfeit *mumia* made from the bodies of executed criminals.

⁵³ On collecting in Venice, see Paula Findlen, "The Market and the World: Science, Culture, and Collecting in the Venetian Republic," in B. Aikema, R. Lauber and M. Seidel, eds., *Il collezionismo a Venezia e nel Veneto ai tempi della Serenissima* (Venice, 2005), pp. 55–68. This article has an extensive bibliography on the subject.

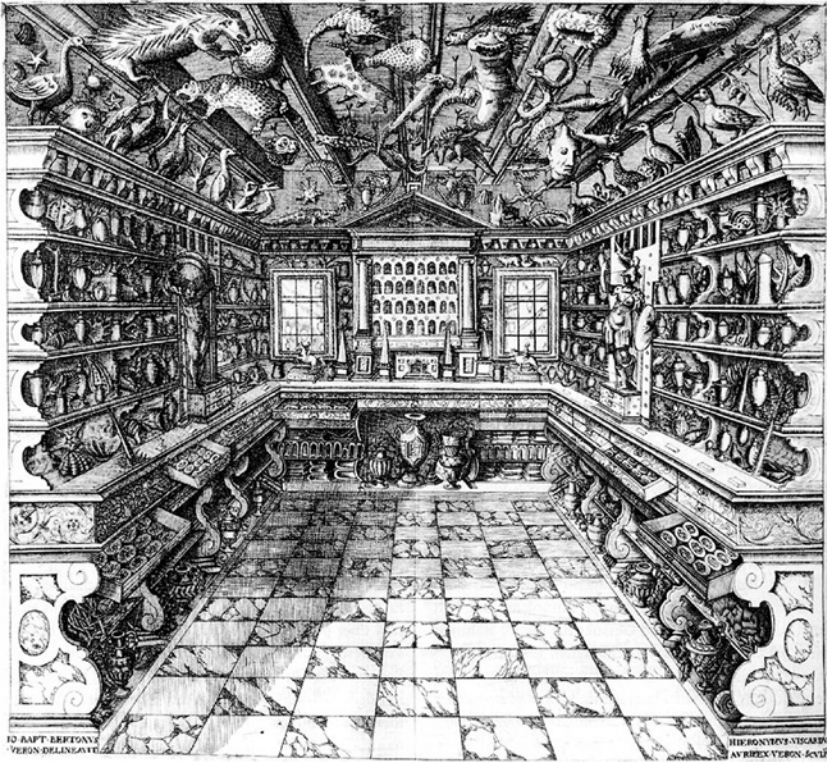


Figure 19.2. Francesco Calzolari's cabinet of curiosities in his Verona pharmacy. With its display of exotica from all over the world, Calzolari's pharmacy was literally a natural history museum. Although Calzolari's was the most famous pharmacy in the Venetian Republic, pharmacies in Venice displayed equally fascinating curiosities. Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, University of Wisconsin.

in the Venetian republic was that of the Verona apothecary Francesco Calzolari.⁵⁴ Calzolari's celebrated museum was on the itinerary of practically every Grand Tour in the early modern period. The museum housed an amazing collection of fossils, dried plants, and other artificial and natural objects. Stuffed animals, birds, and reptiles hung from the ceiling and were displayed on shelves, all tokens of the exotic lands that Europeans had visited (Fig. 19.2).

⁵⁴ Umberto Tergolina-Sislanzoni-Brasco, "Francesco Calzolari speziale veronese," *Bolettino storico italiano dell'arte sanitaria* 33 (1934), 3–20; Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1994), pp. 65–67.

The pharmacies were also theaters of scientific demonstration. The debate over ancient versus modern medicine was argued during the annual ritual of making theriac, the universal antidote of antiquity. First described by Galen, theriac was a rare and costly medicament thought to be a panacea to cure all illnesses. Compounded from 64 different ingredients, theriac, writes Paula Findlen, “was designed to mirror man’s physiological complexity; each ingredient corresponded to a particular part and function of the human body.”⁵⁵

The theriac-making rite was held each spring under the strict supervision of the Provveditori alla Sanità, or Public Health Office (see below). The spectacles took place on the piazzas outside the pharmacy shops that were lucky enough to obtain one of the coveted licenses to make the drug. The piazza was adorned with rich damasks and busts of Hippocrates and Galen. Rows of benches held great majolica jars filled with the herbs and gums and spices that were used to make up the ancient antidote: pepper, myrrh, gum arabic, cinnamon, fennel, rose petals, iris roots, opium, amber, and various aromatic herbs from the East. On the highest bench in the back row, arranged in a neat line, stood several dozen glass vessels containing live snakes. The principal ingredient of theriac—the one that gave the drug its potency—was the flesh of vipers killed and dissected according to a prescribed method. In fact, so many vipers were killed to make theriac in Venice that by the 17th century the species had completely disappeared from the Euganean Hills outside Padua, where they were traditionally collected.

When all was prepared, the Priors of the College of Medicine arrived dressed in their academic robes to solemnly inspect the ingredients. Everything about the scene enhanced the ritual’s pomp and ceremony. Watching the production of theriac in Venice was a regular part of travelers’ itineraries. John Evelyn, who visited Venice in 1645, reported seeing “the extraordinary ceremony whereof I had been curious to observe, for it is extremely pompous and worth seeing.” His purchase of some “treacle,” as it was termed, was one of his most prized acquisitions in Venice.

The physicians vigorously debated the virtues of theriac. Humanists attacked the widespread medieval reliance on polypharmacy, which they considered to be a corruption by Arabic texts, and advocated a return to the “simples”—remedies derived from a single plant, animal, or mineral ingredient—supposedly favored by the ancient physicians. Theriac presented humanists with a particularly challenging case. On one hand, the

⁵⁵ Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, p. 241.

drug was cited in authentic ancient sources, including Galen. Yet, with 64 different ingredients, how could one guarantee that all were genuine and that none were in conflict with one another? Many of the ingredients that went into making the drug—such as the famed opobalsum of antiquity, the original Balm of Gilead—were exotic and difficult to find. How, then, could one distinguish true theriac from the cheaper, imitation varieties sold by charlatans?

Exploration and trade not only transformed the European economy but also changed the way people thought about the natural world. The bustling commerce in spices and other natural goods made the flora and fauna of distant parts of the world visible everywhere and made natural history the subject of everyday conversation. Historian Harold Cook observes, “the ways of life associated with commerce that increasingly dominated Europe focused attention on the objects of nature.”⁵⁶ Above all, science and commerce had in common “a certain kind of interested engagement with objective knowledge and an attentive appreciation for collective generalizations based on exacting information about the object with which they dealt.”⁵⁷ The exotic and novel consumer items that populated the strange new world of things that was the Renaissance riveted attention on particulars. Out of the intersection of commerce and natural history emerged a new sensitivity to the “facts” of nature. That new awareness would be crucial to what we call the Scientific Revolution.⁵⁸

Natural History

Between the 1530s and the 1560s, the ancient science of natural history experienced a renaissance in Western Europe, and Venice played a prominent role in its rebirth.⁵⁹ In 1533, the Venetian Senate established the first university chair for the teaching of medicinal “simples”—plants essential to the fabrication of drugs—at Padua, and appointed Francesco Bonafede to the position. Bonafede lobbied for the creation of a botanical

⁵⁶ Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, pp. 410–11.

⁵⁷ Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, p. 57.

⁵⁸ Lorraine Daston, “Baconian Facts, Academic Civility, and the Prehistory of Objectivity,” *Annals of Scholarship* 8 (1991), 337–63; Daston, “Factual Sensibility,” *Isis* 79 (1988), 452–67; Mary Poovey, *History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago, 1998).

⁵⁹ Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago, 2006).

garden that would provide him with the materials that he would use in teaching his course on medicinal plants. The Senate, concerned about competition from institutions such as Pisa, complied with Bonafede's request, and by a 1545 decree provided a plot of land rented from the monastery of San Giustina in Padua, creating the first university botanical garden in Italy. The botanist Luigi Anguillara (ca. 1512–70) was appointed as its first prefect. In the 1557 edition of his commentary on Dioscorides's *De materia medica*, the Siennese botanist Piero Mattioli could report that "the illustrious Venetian Senate, persuaded by the most learned College of Physicians of Padua and other distinguished doctors, has, a few years ago, built in the city of Padua an ample garden for public enjoyment and the ornament of medicine."⁶⁰

In adding natural history to the curriculum of the University of Padua, the Venetian government helped to create a new scientific profession.⁶¹ By giving the ancient discipline of natural history a permanent place in the university curriculum, the authorities not only enhanced the intellectual stature of natural history but also put in motion the process of creating the disciplines of botany, zoology, and geology, distinct from medicine but serving as complementary forms of natural knowledge.⁶² Much as anatomy emerged as an autonomous discipline, the natural history disciplines developed into a distinct scientific profession.

The Medical World of Early Modern Venice

Early modern Venice had scores, if not hundreds, of medical providers. At the top of the hierarchy that defined the Republic's medical world stood the physicians. University educated and able to command high fees, they were experts on diseases affecting the internal body, as opposed to surgeons, who treated disorders of the outer body, such as fractures and skin lesions. The theoretical foundation of the physician's art was the ancient doctrine of the four humors, which enabled physicians to understand the all-important causes of sickness and to propose a cure. Health and illness were primarily matters of balance and imbalance of the four bodily humors—blood, yellow bile, phlegm, and black bile—which determined a person's complexion. Correspondingly, treatment consisted

⁶⁰ Quoted in Findlen, "Market and the World," p. 56.

⁶¹ Findlen, "Formation of a Scientific Community."

⁶² Ogilvie, *Science of Describing*.

of prescribing a diet and routine of life, or regimen, aimed at maintaining or restoring the natural humoral balance. This was done by regulating the so-called non-naturals, that is, by tailoring a patient's diet, exercise, and environmental conditions to achieve the optimum complexion and restore the humors to their proper equipoise. The therapy was designed primarily to maintain health; physicians were quite aware that their power to change the course of an illness was limited.

Below the physicians in the hierarchy of medical providers stood the surgeons. Although surgeons occupied a lower rung on the ladder of the medical professions than physicians, historians have tended to exaggerate the division between the two. By the 15th century, some Italian universities, including Padua, had begun offering courses and degrees in surgery. Most university-trained surgeons became members of the Venetian College of Surgeons, which regulated their practice. The distinguished surgeon and anatomist Gabriele Falloppio, for example, held the chair of anatomy and surgery at Padua and became a member of the Venetian College of Surgeons. Ordinary barber-surgeons, in contrast, were not admitted to the College of Surgeons but were instead enrolled in the barber's guild. Members of the Venetian College of Surgeons, who were better educated and more highly respected than most historians have acknowledged, occupied a position midway between the guild of barber-surgeons and the College of Physicians. Yet, while physicians could also practice surgery in Venice (and did not shrink from doing so), surgeons could by no means practice medicine. To attempt to do so could incur severe penalties. In 1546, Giacomo de Musis, a member of the Venetian College of Surgeons who took a doctorate in surgery at Padua in 1543, was exiled from Venice for 18 months for failing to consult a physician in the case of a noblewoman who died under his care.⁶³

Barber-surgeons and midwives occupied the lowest rung on the hierarchy of health professions. In theory, surgeons (whether members of the College of Surgeons or the Guild of Barbers) intervened only under a physician's order as part of a prescribed cure. The reality, however, was quite different. The barber-surgeon's most common task, phlebotomy, was for many patients a normal part of health maintenance: seasonal bloodlettings were commonly self-prescribed as part of everyday health management. In addition to performing phlebotomies, the barber-surgeons were authorized to

⁶³ Richard Palmer, "Physicians and Surgeons in Sixteenth-Century Venice," *Medical History* 23 (1979), 455.

set broken bones, treat wounds, and medicate abscesses and skin diseases. Because their cures were more accessible and less expensive than those of physicians, however, surgeons routinely treated a much broader range of illnesses than they were officially empowered to resolve.

Midwives, though near the bottom of the medical hierarchy, performed tasks that far outstripped their official functions.⁶⁴ Beyond assisting at childbirth and delivering virtually all of Venice's newborns, midwives treated a wide variety of female complaints. Although the treatment of women's disorders was by no means the exclusive domain of midwives, men tended to cede women's reproductive health to women on grounds of modesty. Midwives were also charged with washing and dressing the dead in preparation for burial. In addition, midwives often testified as experts in marital disputes—for instance, to determine by tactile examination whether a marriage had been consummated, whether a married woman was still a virgin, or whether a man was impotent.⁶⁵ Theirs were the hands, along with those of the barbers, that touched the body, whether alive or dead, whether chaste or fallen, whether dirty or covered with sores.

Although midwives were required to report all births within a day of their delivery, until the 17th century the profession went largely unregulated—birth being considered a private matter among women. In 1624, citing concern over infant mortality, the Health Office passed the first of a series regulations meant to control midwives.⁶⁶ The law required that all midwives be examined and registered on the official midwives' roll. In order to receive a license, midwives had to provide testimony from the midwife under whom they had apprenticed and had to be examined by one doctor and "two women expert in the profession" who had already been approved by the Health Office.⁶⁷ Subsequent legislation furthered the medicalization of midwifery in Venice.

Charlatans, Empirics, and Popular Healers

For most common ailments, Venetians rarely bothered to call a physician. In addition to physicians and surgeons, unlettered empirics of all kinds

⁶⁴ Nadia Maria Filippini "Levatrici e ostetricanti a Venezia tra sette e ottocento," *Quaderni storici* 58 (1985), 149–80.

⁶⁵ Joanne M. Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 91–95.

⁶⁶ Nelli-Elena Vanzan Marchini, *I Mali e i rimedi della Serenissima* (Venice, 1995), p. 131.

⁶⁷ Nelli-Elena Vanzan Marchini, *Le Leggi di sanità della Repubblica di Venezia*, 4 vols (Vicenza, 1995–2003), 1:431.

set up shop and competed for patients, some legally, others not. It was a surprisingly specialized group of medical providers, including experts in treating cataracts, fractures, abscesses, hernias, and bladder stones. The piazzas swarmed with itinerant healers competing with one another and with regular doctors. Charlatans in bright costumes pitched their wares and acted out comedies. Tooth drawers set up temporary shop in the squares and hung out banners advertising their services. Herb women offered a potion for whatever ailed you, while druggists and distillers produced a steady supply of medicinal waters.

Tasked with controlling this swarm of practitioners was the *Provveditori alla Sanità*, or Public Health Office. Originally established to deal with plague and other health emergencies, the *Sanità* eventually acquired broad jurisdiction, including the licensing of medical practitioners. Empirics and charlatans also had to be licensed to sell their remedies in the city, and were required to leave a sample of their remedies with the *Sanità* for testing.⁶⁸ Though required by law to register with the Health Office, large numbers of itinerant practitioners made their rounds of the piazzas and moved on without notice. Finding and prosecuting offenders would have been extremely difficult. Indeed, only ten empirics were prosecuted for operating without a license between 1545 and 1560, a lackluster enforcement record that was intolerable to the College of Physicians. In 1567, the College finally pressured the Health Office to grant it the privilege of examining and certifying the degrees and competencies of medical providers, rather than merely asking the College for its opinions concerning qualifications. Under the new provisions, failure to obtain a license from the College of Physicians carried a penalty of 18 months in the galleys.

Although the charlatans (*ciarlatani*) who crowded the Piazza San Marco came in many varieties and from many different places, they shared one thing in common: all were itinerants who moved from city to city selling their medical and household wares. In a treatise on medical errors, *De gli errori popolari d'Italia*, first published in 1598, the physician and friar Scipione Mercurio characterized the *ciarlatani* as "mountebanks, trinket-sellers, jesters, and generally anyone who, from a platform set up in the square, or from a horse, sells medicine, powders, compounds, and oils to

⁶⁸ On the licensing of charlatans, see David Gentilcore, *Medical Charlatanism in Early Modern Italy* (Oxford, 2006), ch. 4.

heal various diseases, preaching with a thousand oaths and lies the thousand wonders of the things they are selling.”⁶⁹

Not all observers were as skeptical as Mercurio. Even physicians, though usually at odds with the charlatans, were sometimes impressed by their abilities. In 1580, the prior of the College of Physicians was so taken by an itinerant snake-handler’s skill that he recommended the healer to the Sanità. The snake-handler, Bartolomeo Riccio, who came from Puglia, was one of the so-called “Men of Saint Paul” (*sanpaolari*) who sold an antidote for poisonous bites under the trade name “St. Paul’s grace” (*gratia di San Paolo*) (Fig. 19.3). With the prior’s recommendation in hand, Riccio promptly went to the Health Office with his box of serpents and proceeded with a “demonstration” of the drug’s effectiveness. Under the watchful eyes of the astounded *Provveditori*, Riccio riled the angry vipers until they bit him repeatedly on the torso. Although the bites swelled and turned black, Riccio calmly applied his Maltese earth ointment and, to the committee’s amazement, was immediately healed. The examiners were so impressed that they ruled that for ten years no one other than Riccio be allowed to sell the remedy in Venice.⁷⁰

Did any of the charlatans’ cures actually work? In strictly medical terms most were not effective—but the same can be said of the remedies used by the physicians. Whether the charlatans’ nostrums “worked” or not depended on expectations and perceptions. A purgative that purges obviously works, though it may not cure the underlying condition that caused the ailment. The fact that the charlatans’ medicines sold so well means that they must have been perceived to work. Perhaps they acted at a symbolic level, just as placebos “work” for certain conditions. Or, perhaps the charlatans’ remedies were perceived to work because they resulted in physiological changes (such as vomiting or temporary relief of an annoying skin itch) that convinced users that the remedies were efficacious.

Public Health and the Control of Plague

Among the novelties of the Renaissance were new diseases, foremost of which was syphilis, probably introduced into Europe from the New World

⁶⁹ Scipione Mercurio, *De gli errori popolari d'Italia* (Verona, 1645), p. 271.

⁷⁰ William Eamon, “Markets, Piazzas, Villages,” in Roy Porter, ed., *The Cambridge History of Science*, 8 vols (Cambridge, 2003–09), vol. 3 (2006): *Early Modern Science*, ed. Katherine Park and Lorraine Daston, pp. 220–21.



Figure 19.3. Among the myriad healers swarming the piazzas in early modern Venice, the snake handler (*sanpaolaro*) was one of the strangest and most dramatic. This print, from a portfolio of drawings on the humble trades, depicts one performing on a Bologna piazza, but the scene was often repeated on the Piazza San Marco in Venice. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Le arte per via* (Bologna, 1660).

Courtesy of Arnaldo Forni Editore.

by seamen on Columbus's returning voyage. Spanish soldiers carried the sickness to Naples, where troops in Charles VIII's invading army were infected and took the illness back to France—hence the disease's 16th-century name, *Mal Francese*, or French Disease. Although today syphilis is a treatable malady, in the Renaissance it was an incurable scourge. Observers in Venice noted the threat of syphilis as early as 1499, when the diarist Marin Sanudo reported that a Venetian galley at Corfu was unable to set sail because the crew was infected with the French disease.⁷¹ Early on, physicians recognized that *Mal Francese* was a venereal disease, and hence the control of syphilis was inextricably bound up with the control of prostitution.⁷²

By 1522, the number of cases reported in Venice had grown to the point that the Public Health Office authorized the creation of the Spedale degli Incurabili [Hospital for Incurables], which was founded by two noblewomen, Maria Malipiera Malipiero and Marina Grimani.⁷³ The Incurabili hospital, like similar hospitals founded throughout Italy, was specifically intended as a hospital for the treatment of victims of the French Disease. Although pious charity was certainly an important motivation for the establishment of the Incurabili hospital, the fear and disgust engendered by the appearance of syphilis victims on the streets of Venice also contributed. The Health Office's decree founding the hospital aimed at addressing the problems created by "people who are sick and with the sores of Mal Francese and other illnesses."⁷⁴ Mal Francese was the main but not the only concern of the government. Indigence was also seen as a social problem, and the sick poor were deemed a public nuisance. The *Sanità* noted:

Some of these persons in their bodily weakness languish in the streets and the doorways of churches and public places both at San Marco and the Rialto to beg for a living; and some, being inured to their profession of begging, have no wish to seek a cure and loiter in these same places, giving

⁷¹ Laura J. McGough, "Demons, Nature, or God? Witchcraft Accusations and the French Disease in Early Modern Venice," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 80 (2006), p. 226.

⁷² Laura J. McGough, *Sexuality and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice: The Disease That Came to Stay* (Basingstoke, 2011).

⁷³ Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson, and Roger French, *The Great Pox: The French Disease in Renaissance Europe* (New Haven, 1997), p. 165. On the history of hospitals in early modern Venice, see Bernard Aikema and Dulcia Meijers, eds., *Nel Regno dei poveri. Arte e storia dei grandi ospedali veneziani in età moderna 1474–1797* (Venice, 1989). On the *Incurabili*, see pp. 131–48.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Arrizabalaga et al., *Great Pox*, p. 166.

forth a terrible stench and infecting their neighbours and those with whom they live.⁷⁵

The Sanità decreed that if any *malfranciosati* should refuse to enter the hospital to be cared for, they would be banished from the city. As during all epidemics, it was convenient to find a scapegoat, whether beggars, prostitutes, or foreigners; public policy was guided by a mixture of Christian charity and intolerance.

Other diseases were terrifyingly familiar. Bubonic plague, still the century's most feared infection, had not diminished in its fury in the century and a half since its most violent outbreak during the Black Death of 1347–48. Plague epidemics were reported regularly in Venice during the early modern period.⁷⁶ Although it is not always possible to identify the exact disease involved in each pestilence, many were, in fact, plague. However, other epidemic diseases struck with nearly equal ferocity, so many that contemporaries referred to them all, simply, as *peste*—a term that referred not only to bubonic plague but also to influenza, typhus, meningitis, smallpox, and a host of other diseases—in fact, to any disease that contemporaries regarded as contagious.

The defense of the city against the spread of epidemics fell to the Provveditori alla Sanità [Public Health Office], which was founded by the Senate in 1478.⁷⁷ The Health Office's duties also included enforcing hygienic regulations, imposing standards for licensing medical practitioners, regulating charlatans and itinerant healers, inspecting pharmacies, approving patent medicines, and overseeing the lazaretto, where plague victims were sequestered. By the middle of the 16th century, its duties had expanded even further to include the marketing of meat, fish, fruit, grain, oil, and wine; the water and sewage systems; hospitals and hostels; beggars and prostitutes; the cemeteries; and the Jewish community.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Quoted in Arrizabalaga et al., *Great Pox*, p. 166.

⁷⁶ More than 50 plague epidemics were reported in the Venetian Republic between 1400 and 1600. See Richard Palmer, *The Control of Plague in Venice and Northern Italy 1348–1600* (Ph.D. diss., University of Kent at Canterbury, 1978), pp. 328–37; and Alfonso Corradi, *Annali delle epidemie occorse in Italia dalle prime memorie fino al 1850 compilati con varie note e dichiarazioni*, 4 vols (Bologna, 1973).

⁷⁷ Vanzan Marchini, *I Mali*. In addition, see Salvatore Carbone, *Provveditori e sopraprovveditori alla Sanità della Repubblica di Venezia* (Rome, 1962); and Cipolla, *Public Health and the Medical Profession in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1976).

⁷⁸ Cipolla, *Public Health*, p. 32.

Although the Health Office was a lay institution staffed by nobles who were not physicians, in licensing new drugs and examining medical practitioners the Sanità always consulted with the College of Physicians (Physicians' Guild). An august body made up of prominent physicians, usually members of the medical faculty, the College was charged with examining applicants seeking licenses to practice and was required to communicate the names of those approved to the Sanità. The Health Office retained two physicians on a permanent basis. The first was responsible for the medical care of patients in the Lazaretto Vecchio, where plague victims were sequestered and treated. The second, the *medico per la terra*, was mainly concerned with identifying cases of plague in the city. Central to the defense of Venice from plague was the early identification of any outbreak of the disease in the city. For this purpose, the Health Office recorded all deaths in Venice, noting symptoms of the deceased persons and the length of their illnesses. In suspicious cases the *medico per la terra* was sent to investigate.⁷⁹

In 1576, one of the worst plagues in its history struck Venice, testing the ability of medical experts and the city's public health system to contain the disease.⁸⁰ The combined performance of the two was not impressive. Girolamo Mercuriale, one of the University of Padua's most distinguished physicians, was called in as the leader of a team of medical experts, all professors, to advise on dealing with the epidemic.⁸¹ Admired at home and abroad, Mercuriale was initially hailed as the savior of the city—thanks to his reassuring assessment, based on the authority of the ancient doctors, that the disease in Venice could not possibly be plague. Mercuriale advanced many learned arguments for his opinion. His line of reasoning rested on the Hippocratic doctrine holding that plague was caused by corruption of the air; hence, since everyone breathes the same air, the sickness could not be plague. Mercuriale urged the city to relax the rigorous measures of control it had instituted against the epidemic.

The Provedditori alla Sanità were horrified by Mercuriale's pronouncement and the acclaim he received from the population. The health officials steadfastly opposed the opinion of the Padua physicians, while Mercuriale,

⁷⁹ Palmer, "Physicians and Surgeons," p. 451.

⁸⁰ Paolo Preto, *Peste e società a Venezia, 1576* (Vicenza, 1978).

⁸¹ Richard Palmer, "Girolamo Mercuriale and the Plague of Venice," in A. Arcangeli and V. Nutton, eds., *Girolamo Mercuriale: Medicina e cultura nell'Europa del Cinquecento* (Florence, 2008), pp. 51–65.

safely back in Padua, began preparing a series of lectures on the plague intended to bolster his case. In the end, the epidemic itself decided the issue. The number of victims increased dramatically, and by 1577, tens of thousands had succumbed to the epidemic. Although Mercuriale, thanks to his treatise on plague, *De Pestilentia*, recovered his reputation among the academic community, his blunder in misdiagnosing the epidemic of 1576 was never forgotten in Venice. Even so, when the plague struck Venice again in 1630–31, another Padua professor, Santorio Santorio, was put in charge of organizing the city's response to the epidemic. Like Mercuriale, Santorio denied that the disease was plague, in opposition to the city's chief health officer. In that epidemic, deaths totaled more than 46,000.

Venice's struggle with—and ultimately victory over—plague was commemorated in the city's architecture. The Church of Redentore was built following the cessation of the plague of 1576, and in 1631, following the last great plague epidemic of 1630, the church of Santa Maria della Salute was erected on the Grand Canal.

Medicine and the Supernatural

It was not just on matters relating to the control of epidemics that the authorities called upon physicians to serve as experts. The Inquisition also relied on the testimony of doctors to determine whether alleged cases of witchcraft were caused by demons or occurred by natural means. Direct evidence of witchcraft was fragile. How, for example, does one tell a case of witchcraft from a case of poisoning or the French Disease? Who can provide the expertise to make such determinations? In practice, cases of witchcraft often turned on definitions of "natural" and "supernatural"—and how to tell them apart. With the Reformation drumming in the background, such issues were crucial to civic authorities in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The medical profession thus gained a new set of tasks in the 17th century. Increasingly, as denunciations of *malificio* drew skepticism, Venetians relied on the opinions of specialists, particularly medical specialists, to support their allegations about the operation of supernatural forces. It is hardly surprising that the authorities turned to physicians as experts to distinguish between the natural and the supernatural. Most witchcraft denunciations involved physical maladies of some sort, and the education of physicians would have inclined them toward naturalistic explanations. Moreover, the borderline between natural and demonic was practically

indeterminate in the early modern period. Possession was treated with purgatives as well as with prayers.⁸² As denunciations grew more commonplace, the Inquisition placed a higher burden on providing evidence for *malificio*, and turned to physicians to provide it.⁸³

Arguments over the existence of witchcraft continued well into the 18th century. The debate broke out publicly in the 1740s when the Venetian *erudit* Girolamo Tartarotti published a treatise on witchcraft titled *Congresso noturno delle lammie* [Night Congress of the Witches, 1749]. It was no mere academic exercise, for, although sorcery trials had decreased in Venice, they had not entirely ceased. Tartarotti did not deny the existence of demons; he argued, however, that most instances of alleged witchcraft were simply cases of superstitious beliefs. Almost immediately, the Venetian patrician Scipione Maffei weighed in with a treatise, *De Arte magica dileguata* [The Art of Magic Dismissed, 1749], in which he unequivocally rejected the reality of magic and demonic power.⁸⁴ The debate opened up by Tartarotti and Maffei continued, unresolved, for several decades.

The Scientific Underworld of Early Modern Venice

Scientific activity in early modern Venice was not limited to the universities and the official institutions of the Republic. In addition to physicians, surgeons, pharmacists, and mathematics teachers, Venice was the home of dozens of alchemists, distillers, and empirical healers. Together, they comprised a throng of experimenters who followed the path laid out by Alessio Piemontese, Italy's prototypical "professor of secrets." Alessio's *Secreti* (a work actually by the Venetian popular writer Girolamo Ruscelli and published in 1555 under the pseudonym of Alessio) told of an assiduous collector of alchemical and medicinal "secrets," that "Alessio" chose to publish for the benefit of the world.⁸⁵

Leonardo Fioravanti (1517–c.1590), Italy's most famous professor of secrets, lived in Venice for more than 15 years, and his voluminous writings, all published by leading Venetian presses, provide a glimpse into

⁸² Guido Ruggiero, "The Strange Death of Margarita Marcellini: Male, Signs and the Everyday World of Pre-modern Medicine," *American Historical Review* 106 (2001), 1141–58.

⁸³ Jonathan Seitz, *Witchcraft and Inquisition in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge, 2011).

⁸⁴ On the debate, see Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 401–03.

⁸⁵ On Alessio, see William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton, 1994).

the activities of Venice's scientific underworld.⁸⁶ Fioravanti's books are populated with alchemists such as Giacomo Torellis, a distiller who worked in the Bear pharmacy; Decio Bellobuono, who operated a distillery in the Campo dei Frari, where he made medicinal waters; and Giovandomenico di Fabii, "a man of great doctrine and wisdom in the arts of natural philosophy and distillation" whose inventions included a distilled water to nourish a tree whose leaves, eaten daily, restored health and vigor.⁸⁷ Fioravanti's companions included potters, instrument makers, lens grinders, pharmacists, glassblowers, and countless others.

Mainly craftsmen, they had an intimate knowledge of materials, because they experimented with them every day. Torellis was said to have understood perfectly the properties of more than 2000 different plant, mineral, and animal substances.⁸⁸ Such an impressive body of knowledge could only have been gained by the sort of close-up empirical observation that was part of the artisan's everyday experience.⁸⁹ Passionately devoted to experiments, Fioravanti and his companions were all part of a thriving but practically invisible scientific underworld. In one way or another, they were all professors of secrets, like Alessio Piemontese.

To the professors of secrets, alchemy was the science of sciences. Fioravanti defined alchemy as the art of transmutation: "that is, transmuting one thing into another."⁹⁰ By that he meant imitating how things are made in the workshop, such as, for example, when the dyer makes a fast dye for wool. Such matters were "secrets" that craftsmen knew by long practice but were entirely new to Renaissance readers. To the professors of secrets, alchemy symbolized what experimentation could accomplish. Although Fioravanti praised alchemy as a "divine art," he disassociated himself from gold-making, which he regarded as a fruitless enterprise.

Tommaso Garzoni, who first dubbed these avid experimenters the "professors of secrets," asserted that "professing" secrets necessarily meant publishing them.⁹¹ Fioravanti revealed the ones that he and his Venetian companions discovered in his book *Compendio de i secreti rationali*

⁸⁶ William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine, and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy* (Washington, D.C., 2010).

⁸⁷ Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci medicinali* (Venice, 1561), p. 178; Fioravanti, *Dello specchio di scientia universale* (Venice, 1567), b7r.

⁸⁸ Leonardo Fioravanti, *La chirurgia* (Venice, 1570), p. 26v.

⁸⁹ Smith, *Body of the Artisan*.

⁹⁰ Leonardo Fioravanti, *Compendio de i secreti rationali* (Venice, 1564), p. 75r-v.

⁹¹ Tommaso Garzoni, *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*, ed. Paolo Cherchi, 2 vols (Venice, 1588; Turin, 1996), p. 324.

[*Compendium of Rational Secrets*], which came out in 1564. With a dozen 16th- and 17th-century editions, it became one of the most popular scientific books of the age.

Fioravanti's *Compendium* is a rich compilation of artisanal techniques and lore. It is also completely down-to-earth and devoid of any concern with using alchemy to reach a higher reality or purpose, let alone gold-making. From the *Compendium* and similar books, readers could learn everything from how to distill perfumes and oils to sweeten the body and chamber to making glue and varnish to repair furniture. They would discover secrets for augmenting the larder, too, including instructions for grafting fruit trees and increasing the yield of the garden, preserving fruits and vegetables through the year, and making mustard, condiments, and cheese. Leonardo revealed the secret of alloying silver and gold in order to make them more malleable; how to make metal for forging cannons; and how to make fireworks for celebrations and military offensives, including an "infernal fire" that produces "the most diabolical fire ever imagined."⁹²

The scientific underworld of early modern Venice also extended to the piazzas, where charlatans sold their medical wares and demonstrated their "experiments" to the crowds gathered around.⁹³ Charlatans distilled herbs to make salves and drugs, fashioned "curiosities" for collectors' cabinets, and performed tricks with brilliantly glowing phosphors.⁹⁴ No firm lines can be drawn between the medical and cosmetic products that charlatans concocted in their home laboratories and peddled in the piazzas and those prescribed by physicians and sold in the pharmacies.

Charlatans also brought the world of exotica to the people. Tommaso Garzoni recounted that charlatans exhibited monkeys, Meer cats, marmots, and camels to attract curious bystanders.⁹⁵ Like roving natural history cabinets, the mini-zoos that charlatans paraded on the piazzas gave ordinary people their first look at exotic animals from distant parts of the world.

⁹² Fioravanti, *Compendio*, pp. 87, 100, 90v, 112v, 117v. For the wider context of books of secrets, see Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*.

⁹³ Eamon, "Markets, Piazzas, and Villages."

⁹⁴ On fashioning curiosities, see Paula Findlen, "Inventing Nature: Commerce, Science, and Art in the Early Modern Cabinet of Curiosities," in Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen, eds., *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 2001), pp. 297–323.

⁹⁵ Quoted in M. A. Katritzky, "Marketing Medicine: The Image of the Early Modern Mountebank," *Renaissance Studies* 15 (2001), 121.

The End of the Renaissance

The tradition of mechanics that began with the revival of the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mechanica* came to fruition at the University of Padua, where mechanics became part of the mathematics curriculum. In the 1560s, Pietro Catena (d. 1577) became the first professor of mathematics to include mechanics in his lectures.⁹⁶ Giuseppe Moletti (1531–88) also lectured on the *Mechanical Problems* from the mathematics chair. Moletti, a native of Messina, had been a pupil of the Greek mathematician Maurolico. A prolific author, Moletti wrote a number of mathematical works, including a treatise on mechanics, although most were never published.⁹⁷

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), Moletti's successor in the mathematics chair, had first studied and taught mathematics at the University of Pisa. He held the Padua chair until 1610, when he took the post of mathematician and philosopher to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Like Catena and Moletti, Galileo lectured on the *Mechanical Problems*, and his surviving notes indicate his extensive use of the work in developing his science of mechanics. In 1594, he wrote a short treatise on mechanics entitled *Le meccaniche* [On Mechanics].⁹⁸ He grew increasingly critical of Aristotelian physics and cosmology and soon became convinced that Aristotelian physics was untenable. By 1597, Galileo had converted to the Copernican system, although he did not publicly endorse the theory until 1610.

The circumstances that finally led Galileo to come out openly in support of Copernicanism were precipitated by the news that reached him in 1608 of a new *speculum*, or “spy glass,” that brought distant object closer, which had recently been invented by a Dutch lens grinder.⁹⁹ Galileo improved the device, turned his primitive telescope onto the night sky, and revealed characteristics of the heavens never before seen. In addition to discovering the satellites of Jupiter, Galileo saw countless previously invisible stars. Of more obvious cosmological significance was the revelation that

⁹⁶ Paul Lawrence Rose, “Professors of Mathematics at Padua University 1521–1588,” *Physis* 17 (1975), 300–04; W. R. Laird, “The Scope of Renaissance Mechanics,” *Osiris* 2 (1986), 43–68.

⁹⁷ W. R. Laird, *The Unfinished Mechanics of Giuseppe Moletti* (Toronto, 2000).

⁹⁸ Stillman Drake, “Galileo Gleanings, V: The Earliest Version of Galileo's Mechanics,” *Osiris* 13 (1958), 262–90.

⁹⁹ An excellent summary of the main issues is Eileen Reeves, *Galileo's Glassworks: The Telescope and the Mirror* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008). In addition, see Albert Van Helden, “The Invention of the Telescope,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 67 (1977), 20–36.

the surface of the moon was rough and mountainous like that of the earth, quite unlike the perfect, luminous sphere of Aristotelian cosmology.

Galileo published his discoveries in a 1610 pamphlet, *Starry Messenger*, which he dedicated to Grand Duke Cosimo d'Medici of Tuscany. Galileo quickly realized that his discovery of the moons of Jupiter was his ticket out of the university world and into the Tuscan court. Cleverly, he christened the newly discovered satellites "the Medicean stars" after the ducal family. It was, according to the logic of patronage—which required a gift to the prospective patron—his "gift" to the Grand Duke. The strategy worked. Within weeks after the publication of *Starry Messenger*, Galileo had moved to Florence, where he was given the title Court Philosopher and Mathematician.¹⁰⁰

Galileo's new position, which was a huge boost to his career, thrust him into an unrelenting succession of controversies with academics and clerics. The ultimate outcome of the story was Galileo's 1633 condemnation following his publication of the *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems*, which advanced a variety of arguments supporting the earth's motion. Although the work was carefully crafted as a hypothetical dialogue without openly espousing the Copernican doctrine, the Church authorities were not fooled. Galileo was brought before the Inquisition and forced to abjure his belief in the Copernican system and to spend the rest of his life under house arrest. As far as science in Italy was concerned, the chill had set in.¹⁰¹

After Galileo: The Enlightenment and Science in Venice

By the time Edward Gibbon made his Grand Tour of Europe in 1764, a journey that included an obligatory trip through the Italian Peninsula, most Europeans regarded Italy as a cultural backwash. Galileo's works remained on the Index of Prohibited Books and, compared to northern Europe, scientific development seemed to be at a standstill. Though Venice offered Gibbon hours of diversion, the University of Padua, he lamented, "is a dying taper."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Mario Biagioli, *Galileo Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago, 1993).

¹⁰¹ For a survey of science in late Renaissance Italy, see Paula Findlen, "Science and Society," in John A. Marino, ed., *Early Modern Italy, 1550–1796* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 166–87.

¹⁰² Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life and Writings* (1887 ed.); quoted by Owen Chadwick, "The Italian Enlightenment," in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 91.

Although that judgment may have been too severe, there is little doubt that by the end of the 17th century Venice was a city distinctly marginal to the main currents of European thought. It was not until 1757 that an enlightened pope, Benedict XIV, finally removed books teaching heliocentrism from the Index of Prohibited Books—though Galileo's works remained on the Index until 1822. Although the Venice of Goldoni and Tiepolo was no cultural backwater—indeed it was a city full of art and a magnet for tourists—it was, in its intellectual life, “curiously unwelcoming to its citizens who had new ideas.”¹⁰³

One science in which Venetians continued to maintain a leading position was geography. Ever since the time of Ramusio, Venice had been a clearing house for the publication of geographical literature. Its mapmakers were unexcelled in Europe. Foremost among early modern Venice's geographers was Vincenzo Maria Coronelli (1650–1718), a minorite friar who had a cartographic workshop at the Frari. In 1680, Coronelli who established what has been termed Europe's first geographical society, the *Accademia degli Argonauti*, which he used to acquire cartographical and geographical material and texts from its membership spread across Europe. It was under the imprint of the *Argonauti* that Coronelli—officially appointed “Cosmographer of the Venetian Republic”—published his enormous output of maps and geographical information. However, it is chiefly for his globes that Coronelli is remembered—more than 100 in all, including, most famously, one that he designed for Louis XIV of France. Unmatched in the day for their accuracy, wealth of information, and artistic quality, Coronelli's globes established his place as the premier cartographer of the baroque period.

Newtonian Debates in the Veneto

Geography was a relatively safe science in Counter-Reformation Italy. Cosmology, in contrast, was fraught with dangerous controversy. Whereas elsewhere in Europe the heated battles fought to defend one version or another of the new mechanical philosophies distinguished the cultural history of the 18th century, in Italy such efforts were muffled by Catholic conformism. According to the Venetian ecclesiastic Daniele Concina, writing in 1754, the “splendor and truth of revealed religion” in Italy was

¹⁰³ Chadwick, “Italian Enlightenment,” p. 101.

now locked in a universal, total struggle with thousands of “ateisti, Deisti, Materialisti, Naturalisti, Indifferentisti e Latitudinari” who believe that “men are so many material machines that move according to the laws of mechanism.”¹⁰⁴ Though clearly the rantings of a fanatical cleric, Concina’s extreme views held sway in 18th-century Venice.

In their search for a safe way to carry on debates about the new philosophy, Italian intellectuals found a strategy, ironically, in the example of Galileo.¹⁰⁵ The choice of Galileo as a model went much deeper than mere nationalistic sentiment, for Galileo’s rigorous insistence that the domains of theology and natural philosophy must be kept separate enabled Italian intellectuals to steer a course between the natural theology of Newton and the radical materialism of the Cartesians. Antonio Vallisneri, a Padua professor of philosophy who had studied under the great Galilean Marcello Malpighi at Bologna, was one of the most outspoken proponents of the “Galilean” method of keeping theology at a safe distance from natural philosophy. Others included Antonio Conti (1667–1749), who was born and educated in the Veneto but had spent many years abroad before returning to Venice in 1726. Conti had an excellent knowledge of recent philosophical and scientific developments in France, Germany, and England.¹⁰⁶ While in England between 1715 and 1718, he met Newton and other prominent members of the Royal Society and himself became a member of the Society. Yet despite his cosmopolitanism, Conti thought cautiously: an ominous brush with the Inquisition in 1735 kept him under constant surveillance.

Conclusion

After the trial of Galileo, a mood of pessimism set in among intellectuals and natural philosophers in Venice. Even in the absence of overt repression or censure, the long shadow of the Church stifled any undue mixing of theology with scientific inquiry. The violent controversies over how to interpret Newtonian mechanism, which characterized the European Enlightenment, were conspicuously absent in the Veneto. In

¹⁰⁴ Quoted by Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752* (Oxford, 2006), p. 518.

¹⁰⁵ For science in the Veneto in the 18th century, see Vincenzo Ferrone, *The Intellectual Roots of the Italian Enlightenment: Newtonian Science, Religion, and Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century*, trans. Sue Brotherton (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1982), pp. 89–121.

¹⁰⁶ Israel calls Conti “one of the most impressive figures of the Italian Early Enlightenment.” *Radical Enlightenment*, p. 678.

reality, only a small number of Venetians were interested in the radical ideas of the Enlightenment. The University of Padua lost its luster, giving way to Bologna (where the distinguished anatomist Luigi Galvani graced the faculty) and the University of Pavia (where Ruggiero Boscovich, Alessandro Volta, and other notable experimental scientists taught) as the most important scientific centers in Italy.¹⁰⁷ After two centuries of having played a leading role in the Scientific Revolution, Venetian science—and Italian science in general—was pushed to the margins of European intellectual life.

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¹⁰⁷ Luigi Cerutti, “Dante’s Bones: Geography and the History of Italian Science, 1748–1870,” in Kostas Gavroglu, ed., *The Sciences in the European Periphery During the Enlightenment, Archimedes 2* (Dordrecht, 1999), pp. 95–178.

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VENETIAN ARCHITECTURE

Deborah Howard

This city, amidst the billowing waves of the sea, stands on the crest of the main, almost like a queen restraining its force. It is situated in salt water, and built there, because before there were just lagoons, and then, wanting to expand, firm ground was needed for the building of palaces and houses.¹

Sited on a series of marshy islands in a shallow lagoon, Venice developed unique architectural characteristics in direct response to the peculiar needs of the amphibious terrain. Its architecture therefore reflects the complex interaction of physical and human forces. After the inhabitation of the first few islands of the archipelago before the year 1000, even the land itself was mainly reclaimed artificially.² Land for building was an expensive, hard-won commodity, and the structures themselves were a technological feat on the poorly consolidated sandy ground battered by the tides. Through legislation and the constant monitoring of the size and position of infills, the Republic had the power to determine the overall shape of the city.³ This is the stage upon which the spectacle of the Republic's last four centuries was played out.

Architectural Fabric

The most eloquent source for the study of Venetian architecture of the early modern period is the fabric of the city itself. Free from the impact of traffic, Venice has changed far less than most of the historic cities of Europe, at least in terms of its physical materiality. Many of the spaces and structures depicted in Jacopo de' Barbari's huge bird's-eye view of the

¹ Marin Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae, ovvero la città di Venetia (1493–1530)*, ed. Angela Caracciolo Aricò (Milan, 1980; rev. edn, 2011), p. 20. Translation from David Chambers and Brian Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History* (Oxford, 1992), p. 4.

² Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, "*Sopra le acque salse*": *Espaces, Pouvoir et Société à Venise à la fin du moyen âge*, 2 vols (Rome, 1992); Wladimiro Dorigo, *Venezia origini: Fondamenti, ipotesi, metodi*, 3 vols (Milan, 1993); idem, *Venezia romanica: La formazione della città medioevale fino all'età gotica*, 2 vols + map folder (Verona/Venice, 2003).

³ Crouzet-Pavan, "*Sopra le acque salse*," pp. 72–96; Richard J. Goy, *Building Renaissance Venice: Patrons, Architects and Builders, c.1430–1500* (New Haven/London, 2006), pp. 36–37.

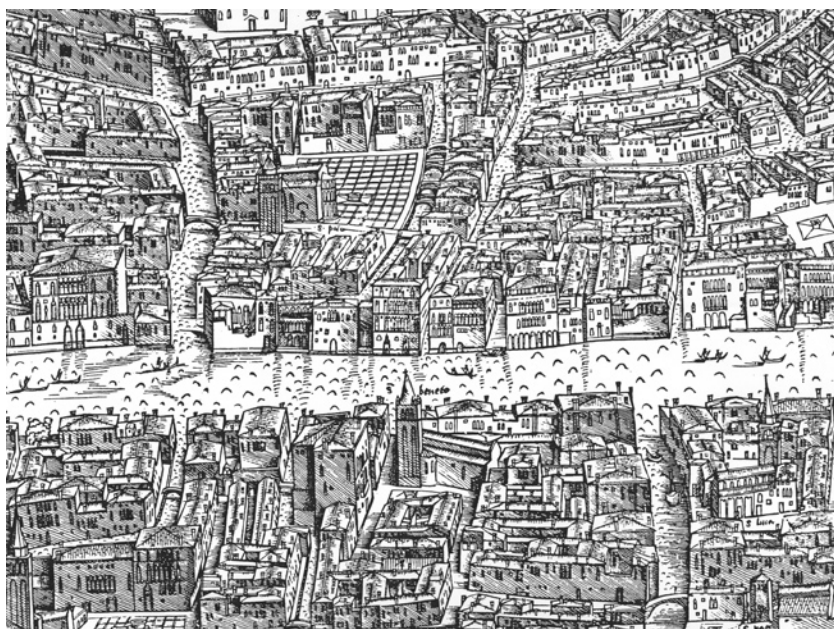


Figure 20.1. Jacopo de' Barbari, bird's-eye view map of Venice, woodcut on six sheets, 1350 × 2820 mm., detail of Grand Canal (Venice, 1500).

city, published in 1500, are still easily recognizable (Fig. 20.1). Despite the 19th-century attempts at modernization by filling in canals and creating new streets, the urban layout is largely unchanged.⁴

Over centuries of land reclamation, Venice gradually acquired the shape of a fish—perhaps, more specifically, a dolphin—with its gaping jaw towards the west and tail fins spreading out beyond the Arsenal shipyards in the east.⁵ Through its body, the Grand Canal traced an inverted “S” like a giant alimentary canal. Before the mid-19th century, only the Rialto Bridge and a series of 13 *traghetto* or gondola ferries straddled the Grand Canal, and the street plans evolved in response to these crossing points. In the oldest settlements, the city developed a dense, labyrinthine

⁴ On the 19th-century alterations to the urban plan, see Giandomenico Romanelli, *Venezia Ottocento: Materiali per una storia architettonica e urbanistica della città nel secolo XIX* (Rome, 1977).

⁵ Deborah Howard, “Venice as a Dolphin: Further Investigations into Jacopo de' Barbari's View,” *Artibus et historiae* 35 (1997), 101–12.

urban fabric.⁶ Houses arranged around interconnected courtyards in a cellular pattern are still visible in the complex once occupied by Marco Polo's family at San Giovanni Crisostomo.⁷ Each of the islands became a separate parish, with its church facing on to an open space known as a *campo* (literally a field, although these were paved one by one over the centuries). As the islets coalesced, continuous—if tortuous—streets linked by bridges began to connect the parishes overland. Subsequent land-drainage schemes, such as those enacted in the district of Cannaregio in the northwest in the late 13th and 14th centuries, adopted more orderly layouts along straight parallel canals, through numerous individual private reclamations coordinated by strict planning controls.⁸

The individuality of the Venetian townscape depends on form, function, and materials. The relative political stability and the strength of the public realm ensured a degree of uniformity in the scale and distribution of the housing stock: a mixture of rich and poor, secular and religious, populated every parish. Although the workforce of the Arsenal was mainly concentrated in the east, and the fishermen around San Niccolo dei Mendicoli in the west, noble families lived all over the city. It was not until the early modern period that the Grand Canal became the most desirable address, its banks gradually smoothed out to create a grand ceremonial route.

The city's building materials created a distinctive palette of red and white, complementing the greenish-blue of the water. Restorers and architects alike are becoming only too slowly aware that the modernist ideals of rigidity and impermeability are an anathema in Venice, where all structures need to be both flexible and breathable to counteract the unstable terrain and high humidity.⁹ Oak piles sunk into the soft sand and mud provided the raft-like foundations for load-bearing walls, but the constant flow of the tides made them inconveniently mobile. As a result,

⁶ Deborah Howard, *Venice & the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on the Architecture of Venice 1100–1500* (New Haven/London, 2000), pp. 6–7, likens this dense urban texture to that of medieval Islamic cities.

⁷ Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*, 2:10–17.

⁸ Crouzet-Pavan, "Sopra le acque salse," pp. 111–14, 119–20; Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*, 1:581–89.

⁹ On building materials and house construction in Venice, see especially Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fols 140r–142r; Abraham Rogatnick et al., *Venice: Problems and Possibilities, special issue of the Architectural Review* 149/891 (1971); Richard J. Goy, *Venetian Vernacular Architecture* (Cambridge, 1989); Goy, *Building Renaissance Venice*, pp. 79–97; Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*, 1:113–16. On the construction trades and the building process, see Goy, *Building Renaissance Venice*, pp. 65–77; Giorgio Gianighian "Building a Renaissance Double House in Venice," *ARQ: Architectural Research Quarterly* 8 (2004), 299–312.

most walls were constructed of the local reddish brick, using a traditional lime mortar to allow flexibility. Being cheap, lightweight, and porous, brick perfectly suited the challenging conditions of the lagoon. Roof tiles of terracotta enhanced the russet hue of the townscape. Many walls were originally protected by a thin layer of stucco, colored with brick dust or even frescoed, though modern restorers often remove these traditional surfaces, applying renderings that are too thick, too rigid, artificially colored, and too impervious.¹⁰ Within the houses, horizontal beams and roof trusses of spruce, fir, or larch tied the vertical load-bearing walls together; these coniferous soft woods were lightweight, elastic, and protected from the damp by their high resin content.

Perhaps the most precious asset of all was the pure white limestone from Istria, easily imported by boat straight from the quarries to the building site. This fine-grained stone, almost completely impervious to water, was the most desirable material for damp-proofing courses, steps, gutters, window-frames, and a multitude of other purposes. Its uniformity and durability made it ideal for carved ornament on traceries and balconies. As a walling material, Istrian stone was always applied as cladding over a brick core to save expense and weight.

Canals permeate the whole city like veins in a leaf, providing water access for the transport of merchandise, building materials, and people. Amid the tidal, brackish channels of the lagoon, however, fresh water supply was in short supply. In response, traditional builders developed an ingenious method of conserving rainwater, inspired by the underground water-conservation systems of the Levant. Water falling on rooftops and paved surfaces drained into underground cisterns—whether in the courtyards of houses or in parish *campi*—where it was filtered through sand to ensure drinkable quality. It has been estimated that in 1856, cisterns still underlay 11 per cent of the entire surface area of the city.¹¹

In recent years, building restoration projects have encouraged a more detailed examination of the building fabric—for instance, work on the Scuola Grande della Misericordia in the 1990s revealed the existence of experimental arched foundations, installed by the architect Jacopo

¹⁰ E. Danzi et al., "Research for Conservation of the Lagoon Building Culture: Catalogue of the External Plasterwork in Venetian Buildings," in, C. A. Fletcher and T. Spencer, eds., *Flooding and Environmental Challenges for Venice and its Lagoon: State of Knowledge* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 193–98.

¹¹ Giorgio Gianighian and Paola Pavanini, "Il tessuto gotico," in Francesco Valcanover and Wolfgang Wolters, eds., *L'architettura gotica veneziana* (Venice, 2000), pp. 157–73, on p. 158.

Sansovino in the 1530s but since forgotten.¹² However, archaeology in the city is still in its infancy because of the problems of waterlogged foundations and the danger of disturbance to existing structures.¹³

Imago Urbis

The distinctive quality of the townscape fostered an obsession with its visual representation. Whether in paint, woodcut, or engraving, city views constituted one of the favorite subjects for artists during the last four centuries of the life of the Republic. Jacopo de' Barbari's remarkable view, laid out on six sheets each more than 90 cm wide, not only involved a major surveying operation undertaken from the tops of the city's *campanili* but also exploited innovations in both papermaking and printing (Fig. 20.1).¹⁴ In the same period, the city's principal confraternities, the six *scuole grandi*, commissioned ambitious cycles of narrative paintings on canvas, many of which adopted city views as their settings. The so-called "eye-witness style" helped to make their religious themes credible through the meticulous realism of the architectural backgrounds.¹⁵

The age of the Grand Tour in the 18th century swelled the market for topographical views as souvenirs, leading to a remarkably comprehensive documentation of the face of the city in works by artists such as Carlevaris, Canaletto, Visentini, and Guardi.¹⁶ The city's unique equilibrium of uniformity and variety conferred an immediately recognizable geographical identity to these images. Yet, at the same time, the viewer of each print or painting could savor its particularity in both space and time through the recognition of landmarks and costume. Utopian qualities apparent at first

¹² Gianni Fabbri, "Dal progetto di Sansovino alle catastrofi del moderno" in G. Fabbri, ed., *La Scuola Grande della Misericordia a Venezia: Storia e progetti* (Venice, 1999), pp. 101–43, on pp. 105–09.

¹³ See, for example, Albert J. Ammerman and Charles E. McClennen, eds., *Venice before San Marco: Recent Studies on the Origins of the City* (Hamilton, N.Y., 2001).

¹⁴ Juergen Schulz, "Jacopo de' Barbari's View of Venice: Map Making, City Views and Moralized Geography before 1500," *Art Bulletin* 60 (1978), 425–74; idem, *La cartografia tra scienza e arte: Carte e cartografi nel Rinascimento italiano* (Modena, 1990), pp. 13–63; Howard, "Venice as a Dolphin"; Giandomenico Romanelli, Susanna Biadene, and Camillo Tonini, eds., *A volo d'uccello: Jacopo de' Barbari e le rappresentazioni di città nell'Europa del Rinascimento*, exh. cat. (Venice, 1999).

¹⁵ As defined by Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (New Haven/London, 1988), p. 4.

¹⁶ See, for example, Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini, eds., *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. (London, 1996).

sight could often dissolve into random untidiness, squalor, or mischief at closer range. Despite the deconsecration and/or destruction of many churches after the fall of the Republic in 1797, this comprehensive body of images has allowed lost or altered buildings to be integrated into our narrative of the city's architectural history.¹⁷

Archives and Antiquarians

In addition to the rich body of visual and textual description from the early modern period, the city possesses unrivaled archival resources. Despite the ravages of two fires in the Doge's Palace in 1574 and 1577, a large proportion of the Republic's written records now fills the shelves of the Archivio di Stato, housed in the former Franciscan friary of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari.¹⁸ These codices, ledgers, and files reveal that state bodies often engaged in lively debate over architectural issues.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the institutional patronage of the confraternities and guilds (the *scuole grandi e piccole*) is often meticulously recorded, despite some frustrating lacunae. Just as the elected magistracies of the Republican government were constantly re-elected, so too the boards of the *scuole* rotated annually, leading to bizarre discontinuities in building policy.²⁰

Although relatively few family archives have been preserved, profuse information on private individuals survives in the notarial records, in the form of testaments and records of legal disputes.²¹ These sources are amplified by further caches of documents left by those who entrusted their affairs to the Procurators of St Mark's on the death of the head of

¹⁷ Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia scomparsa*, 2 vols (Milan, 1977).

¹⁸ Andrea da Mosto, *Archivio di Stato di Venezia: indice generale*, 2 vols (Rome, 1937–40). See also <<http://www.archiviodistatovenezia.it/>>.

¹⁹ Deborah Howard, "Architectural Politics in Renaissance Venice," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 154 (2008), 29–68. These debates are discussed at greater length in eadem, *Venice Disputed: Marc'Antonio Barbaro and Venetian Architecture 1550–1600* (New Haven/London, 2011).

²⁰ These discontinuities are narrated in works on the individual *scuole grandi*, such as Philip L. Sohm, *The Scuola Grande di San Marco, 1437–1550: The Architecture of a Venetian Lay Confraternity* (New York, 1982); Fabbri, ed., *La Scuola Grande*; and Gianmario Guidarelli, *Una gioia ligata in piombo: la fabbrica della Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venezia, 1517–1560* (Venice, 2003).

²¹ On the possible reasons for the paucity of family records in Venice, see James S. Grubb, "Memory and Identity: Why Venetians Didn't Keep *ricordanze*," *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994), 375–87. Some of the few surviving examples have been published as *Family Memoirs from Venice, 15th–17th Centuries*, ed. James S. Grubb (Rome, 2009).

the family. An exceptional case of a surviving private archive relating to a building project is that of Marino Contarini, the patron of the famous Gothic palace known as the Ca' d'Oro, begun in 1421.²² In almost obsessive detail, Contarini documented the whole process of construction of his house and chronicled his employment of bricklayers, masons, carpenters, glassworkers, and blacksmiths, offering us an intimate glimpse into the day-to-day life of a 15th-century building site.

The documentation of the city's religious architecture is similarly patchy. Because the Venetian Republic insisted on retaining jurisdiction over the parishes and nunneries in its long-standing rivalry with the papacy, the patriarchal archives help to fill some lacunae. In particular, apostolic visitations and patriarchal inspections of parish churches yield invaluable information on the state of the buildings, their liturgical functions and their decoration during the Counter Reformation.²³ After the fall of the Republic, the devotional life of the city was transformed by a large-scale reorganization of the parish boundaries and changes to the functions of the churches, but, despite the closure of numerous monasteries, friaries, and convents after 1797, many of the suppressed orders' records were preserved.

The study of Venetian architecture is also indebted to the efforts of dedicated antiquarians. As an avid collector of documents in the decades following the fall of the Republic, Emmanuele Cicogna published his multi-volume book *Delle iscrizioni veneziane* between 1824 and 1853.²⁴ Adopting epigraphy as the focus of the research, the work is a profuse anthology of information on individual buildings, patrons, and artists. Cicogna's rich personal collection of documents is preserved for posterity in the Biblioteca Correr in Venice.

The serious exploitation of the Venetian archives for research in architectural history began in the late 19th century with Pietro Paoletti's magisterial work *L'architettura e la scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia*,

²² Richard J. Goy, *The House of Gold: Building a Palace in Medieval Venice* (Cambridge, 1992).

²³ See, for example, Silvio Tramontin, "La visita apostolica del 1581 a Venezia," *Studi veneziani* 9 (1967), 453–533.

²⁴ Emanuele Cicogna, *Iscrizioni veneziane*, 6 vols (Venice, 1824–53). Giuseppe Tassini collated local oral tradition with historical data to inform his lively compendium *Delle curiosità veneziane*, first published in 1863, which ran into numerous editions, including modern reprints.

published in Venice in 1893.²⁵ Paoletti was the first scholar to attempt to disentangle the identities of the numerous Lombard, Dalmatian, and Venetian stonemasons active in early Renaissance Venice, using payments, contracts, and other documentary sources as evidence. One of the earliest books on the subject to be illustrated with photographs, Paoletti's analysis remains a starting point for any serious research in the field, now amplified by more recent scholarship.²⁶

Print Culture

In parallel with the fascination with topographical images, Venice developed a lively tradition of verbal descriptions of the townscape. While Jacopo de' Barbari, Gentile Bellini, and Carpaccio were depicting the city visually, the manuscript descriptions of Venice by Marin Sanudo (Marino Sanuto) and Marc'Antonio Sabellico launched the genre that was to lead to the first full guidebook, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* by Francesco Sansovino, published in 1581.²⁷ As one of the foremost centers of printing and publishing in Europe, Venice benefited from the relative cheapness of the printed text to diffuse standardized versions of the iconography of civic buildings to the wider public.²⁸ For example, in 1541 Pietro Contarini's poem *L'argoa volgar* explained the meaning of the bronze standard bases in front of St Mark's.²⁹ Similarly, Francesco Sansovino's short dialogue between a Venetian and an outsider, first published under a pseudonym in 1556, discussed the significance of the sculptures on the new Loggetta at the foot of the Campanile of St Mark's designed by his father, the architect and sculptor Jacopo Sansovino.³⁰ These standardized

²⁵ Pietro Paoletti, *L'architettura e la scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia*, 3 vols (Venice, 1893).

²⁶ See especially Susan M. Connell, *The Employment of Sculptors and Stonemasons in Venice in the Fifteenth Century* (New York/London, 1988); and Goy, *The Building of Renaissance Venice*.

²⁷ Sanudo, *De origine*; Marc'Antonio Sabellico, *Del Sito di Venezia Città* (1502), ed. G. Meneghetti (Venice, 1957); Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice, 1581).

²⁸ Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto, 2005).

²⁹ On Pietro Contarini, see Bruce Boucher, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, 2 vols (New Haven/London, 1991), 1:82–83; and Chambers and Pullan, *Venice*, pp. 398–99.

³⁰ Boucher, *The Sculpture*, 1:73–88; David Rosand, *The Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill, 2001), pp. 128–37.

interpretations displaced the slippery meanings doubtless propagated in numerous everyday conversations in the Piazza.

Writers of the early modern period not only pioneered the guidebook and the topographical description; they also established the tradition of the artist's biography. The most influential model was, of course, Giorgio Vasari, who made at least two visits to Venice in 1542 and 1566.³¹ Most of his information about architects in Venice and the Veneto is found not in the first edition of his *Lives of the Artists* of 1550 but in the second edition published in 1568. Two years later, on the death of the Florentine architect and sculptor Jacopo Sansovino, Vasari amplified the biography of his fellow Tuscan in a separate revised edition, published in Venice by the architect's grandson Giacomo Sansovino.³² It is now recognized that, on Jacopo's death, Francesco furnished Vasari with additional material—not only to inflate his late father's reputation but also to support his attempts to reclaim outstanding payments. Vasari's biography stressed Jacopo's radical impact on the townscape of Venice:

Sansovino's method of building was the reason why public and private edifices began to be constructed with new designs and better order, and according to the ancient teaching of Vitruvius [...] he has, as said, with his knowledge and judgment caused that city to be made almost completely new, and to learn the true and good method of architecture.³³

As in antiquity, epistolary collections offered a particularly personal angle. One of the most prolific and influential *poligrafi* of 16th-century Venice, Pietro Aretino, originated from Vasari's home town of Arezzo.³⁴ The initial volumes of his correspondence, addressed to popes, princes, emperors, artists and literati, were issued by Francesco Marcolini, a pivotal cultural figure who also published the first volumes of Serlio's treatise on architecture and the earliest printed compositions of the composer Adrian Willaert.³⁵ As a close friend of both Jacopo Sansovino and Titian, Aretino

³¹ Juergen Schulz, "Vasari at Venice," *Burlington Magazine* 103 (1961), 500–10.

³² Bruce Boucher, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, 2 vols (New Haven/London, 1991, 1992), 1:160–62.

³³ Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols (Florence 1878–85), 7:502–03; English trans. from Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, vol. 2, trans. George Bull (London, 1987), pp. 325, 328.

³⁴ Christopher Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice: Researches on Aretino and his Circle in Venice, 1527–1556* (Florence, 1985).

³⁵ Aretino's letters were published in Venice in six volumes between 1538 and 1557. See Ettore Camesasca, ed., *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, with commentary by Fidenzio Pertile, 3 vols (Milan, 1957–60). Francesco Marcolini published the first volume of Aretino's

bequeathed an invaluable body of background information for the study of both artists. Though disguised as spontaneous, intimate communications, most of Aretino's letters were composed expressly for publication and therefore need to be carefully deconstructed. At the same time, it is crucial to recognize the power of Aretino's pen, for the dissemination of ostensibly private correspondence created a potent publicity machine to support the careers of his friends such as Titian and Sansovino.

Venice's publishing trade also generated a substantial number of influential architectural treatises. Aldus Manutius's *Hypnerotomachia Polifili* of 1499, a complex medievalizing romance infused with architectural content, brilliantly demonstrated the potential of the woodblock and movable type to combine text and image.³⁶ In 1511, during the troubled times of the Wars of the League of Cambrai, the Veronese architect and engineer Fra Giovanni Giocondo published his edition of Vitruvius's *De architectura*.³⁷ This seminal work was not only the earliest coherent version of the text but also the first to be illustrated with woodcut plates. A particularly useful edition of Vitruvius by Francesco Lutio Durantino, published in Venice in 1524, combined Fra Giocondo's lucid illustrations with a slightly modified version of Cesare Cesariano's Italian translation of 1521.³⁸ The first two books of Sebastiano Serlio's treatise on architecture—his Book 4 (1537) and Book 3 (1540)—again demonstrated how the interaction between text and plates could create a powerful medium for the propagation of the classical orders of architecture (Fig. 20.2).³⁹ It was Serlio who provided the Venetian public with the theoretical framework for the understanding of the new buildings of Sansovino—the Mint, the Library, and

letters in 1538, as well as books 4 and 3 of Serlio's treatise on architecture in 1537 and 1540 respectively, and the *Liber quinque missarum Adriani Willaert* in Venice in 1536. For the other side of Aretino's correspondence, also issued by Marcolini in 1551, see Gonaria Floris and Luisa Mulas, eds., *Lettere scritte al signor Pietro Aretino da molti signori* (Rome, 1997). On Marcolini, see Paolo Procaccioli, Paolo Temeroli, and Vanni Tesei, eds., *Un giardino per le arti: Francesco Marcolino da Forlì, la vita, l'opera, il catalogo*, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Forlì, 11–13 ottobre 2007 (Bologna, 2009).

³⁶ Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia poliphili* (Venice, 1499); idem, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: The Strife of Love in a Dream*, trans. Joscelyn Godwin (London, 1999).

³⁷ Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, *De architectura*, ed. Fra Giovanni Giocondo (Venice, 1511).

³⁸ This edition seems to have been well received, for it was republished in Venice in 1535.

³⁹ John Onians, *Bearers of Meaning: The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 263–309; Christof Thoenes, ed., *Sebastiano Serlio* (Milan, 1989); Myra Nan Rosenfeld, *Serlio on Domestic Architecture* (New York, 1997).

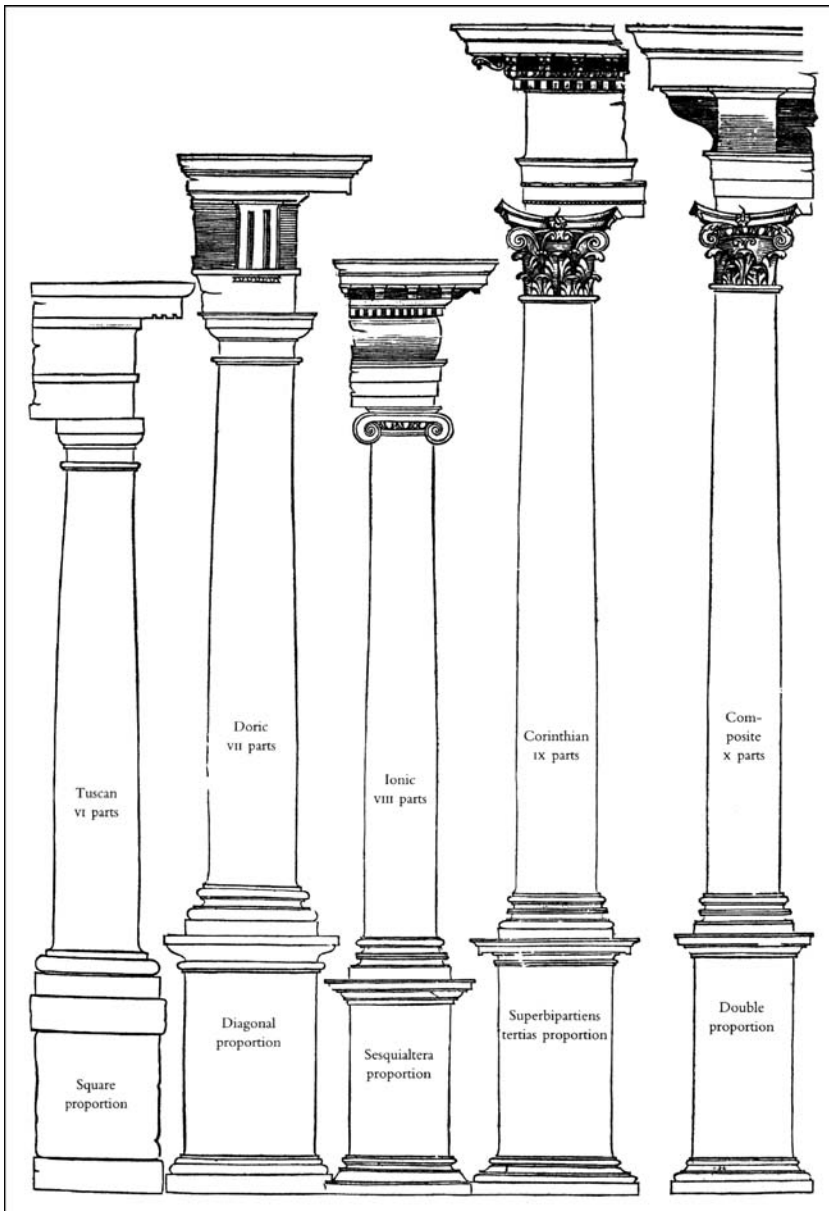


Figure 20.2. Sebastiano Serlio, The Five Orders of Architecture from his Book IV, the *Regole generali dell'architettura* (Venice, 1537).

the Loggetta—that were rising in Piazza San Marco in the same years.⁴⁰ Later, Andrea Palladio created the woodcuts for Daniele Barbaro's Italian translation of Vitruvius in 1556, providing a canonical version of Vitruvian theory.⁴¹ Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (1570) refined the legacy of Serlio, presenting his own portfolio of domestic designs alongside the works of antiquity.⁴²

In 16th-century architectural culture, the printed treatise furnished a body of theoretical knowledge that continually interacted with practice.⁴³ The use of the vernacular, the role of images, and the relative cheapness of the editions allowed architectural theory to permeate down the social scale. No longer the preserve of princes, churchmen, and humanist scholars, architectural theory became accessible to the educated public, the architect, and even the *proto* [supervisor of building works]. Moreover, the printed treatise embodied the authority of the *editio princeps*: the unchanging consistency to be found in every copy of each edition, ready for annotation by the owners who formulated their own responses as marginalia. Although theory and practice followed parallel tracks, each with its own narrative, at the same time information and ideas passed continually to and fro between them. The ultimate victory of classicism over the Gothic style in Venice was assured by its support in print culture. Subsequently, the treatises of Scamozzi, Bertotti Scamozzi, and Milizia developed the orthodox classicism of Palladio from an increasingly academic perspective.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ The Mint (Zecca) was begun in 1536, the Library in 1537, and the Loggetta in 1538. Deborah Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino: Architecture and Patronage in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven/London, 1987), pp. 8–47; Manuela Morresi, *Jacopo Sansovino* (Milan, 2000), pp. 182–227.

⁴¹ *I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio*, trans. and ed. Daniele Barbaro (Venice, 1556). The publisher was Francesco Marcolini.

⁴² Andrea Palladio, *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (Venice, 1570).

⁴³ Jean Guillaume, ed., *Les traités d'architecture de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1988); Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks, eds., *Paper Palaces: The Rise of the Renaissance Architectural Treatise* (New Haven/London, 1998).

⁴⁴ Vincenzo Scamozzi, *L'idea della architettura universale*, 2 vols (Venice, 1615); Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi, *Le fabbriche e i disegni di Andrea Palladio* (Vicenza 1796); Francesco Milizia, *Le vite de' più celebri architetti d'ogni nazione e d'ogni tempo, precedute da un saggio sopra l'architettura* (Rome, 1768); idem, *Principi di architettura civile* (Finale [Vicenza], 1781). See also Daniel McReynolds, *Palladio's Legacy: Architectural Polemics in Eighteenth-Century Venice* (Venice, 2011).

Typologies

More than that of any other Italian city, the architecture of Venice lends itself to study by typology. During the last four centuries of the Republic, building plans and typologies changed little, for the exorbitant cost of new foundations discouraged radical changes in plan. At the same time, social conventions, both private and public, remained far more constant than in many other Italian cities, reducing the need for new spatial arrangements. During the 20th century, the study of typology became a favorite practice of Modernist architects and critics, who sought universal themes based on the search for truth to function.⁴⁵ Yet typology is not an invention of Modernism. From antiquity onwards, treatise writers—including Vitruvius, Alberti, Palladio, and Scamozzi—tended to organize their chapters typologically. Similarly, Francesco Sansovino's guide of 1581, while arranging the religious buildings by geographical area, discussed most of the other monuments according to their type.

The most distinctive typology in the townscape was the Venetian palace, although in deference to republican values, only the palaces of the doge and the patriarch were given the denomination of palazzo. Meanwhile, the rest of the patrician homes—however magnificent—were known as *case* [houses]. In 1549, a Welsh visitor admired the profusion of palaces that lined the banks of the Grand Canal, remarking that “in Venice be above 200 palaces able to lodge a king.”⁴⁶ The façade of the palace defined its public identity, striking a delicate balance between individuality and conformity. It is now clear that the wealthiest *cittadini* occupied houses that resembled those of rich members of the patrician class, while many patricians lived in relatively impoverished circumstances.⁴⁷ The constant subdivision of family patrimony over the generations, combined with the decline in overseas trade, whittled away the wealth of many Venetian noble lines. During the last two centuries of the Republic, however, a number of rich new families were admitted to the officially “closed” nobility, and their efforts to create a sense of lineage and assert their integration stimulated some of the notable design innovations in the period. At the same time, many formerly powerful clans witnessed the fragmentation of

⁴⁵ Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (London, 1976). Richard J. Goy, *Venice: The City and its Architecture* (London, 1997) adopts a typological framework.

⁴⁶ William Thomas, *The History of Italy (1549)*, ed. G. B. Parks (Ithaca, 1965), p. 65.

⁴⁷ Blake de Maria, *Becoming Venetian: Immigrants and the Arts in Early Modern Venice* (New Haven/London, 2010).

their palaces into numerous smaller properties, through repeated subdivision of their inheritance.

Like variations on a musical theme, the palaces exhibit shared characteristics that endured for centuries. The underlying type that became the standard model from about 1200 onwards consisted of four parallel load-bearing walls perpendicular to the façade (Fig. 20.3).⁴⁸ On each floor, these four spine walls enclosed a long central circulation space running from front to back—known on the main living storeys as the *portego*—flanked on either side by smaller, more private rooms. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the mercantile oligarchy used the ground floors of their palaces for the storage of merchandise, although this view has recently been challenged.⁴⁹ The amount of space needed for storage of imported goods varied over time, depending on the timing of sea voyages and fluctuations in commodity prices, but merchants often sublet surplus space to each other during slack periods. Commodities particularly susceptible to damp, such as sugar, might be stored in the attic, and additional warehousing at the Rialto market could supplement the storage space in the owner's house.

Despite the resistance to change, long-established traditions did undergo modifications. In the design of palaces, for example, the picturesque external staircases that adorned the courtyards of 15th-century palaces reached their climax in the remarkable spiral ascent of the Scala del Bovolo of 1500. From this date onwards, the more ostentatious families sought instead to display their wealth by means of grand internal staircases that swallowed up valuable floor space. Similarly, by the 18th century, in the grandest palaces the ballroom replaced the central hall or *portego* as the principal room for entertaining.⁵⁰

It is the tension between the shared features of the type and the individuality of the particular example that enlivens the discussion of any typology. Some building types, such as the confraternity meetinghouses

⁴⁸ Paolo Maretto, *La casa veneziana nella storia della città: Dalle origini all'Ottocento* (Venice, 1986), pp. 76–139 (with useful plans); Goy, *Venetian Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 126–35; Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*, vi:298–333, 352–95; Juergen Schulz, *The New Palaces of Medieval Venice* (University Park, Pa., 2004), pp. 10–21.

⁴⁹ The term *casa fondaco*, suggesting a hybrid between the house and the warehouse, is a 20th-century term (Richard Goy's variation, "palazzo-fondaco," as introduced in his *Venetian Vernacular Architecture*, p. 123, has not gained wide acceptance). On the use of palaces for storing merchandise, see Howard, *Venice & the East*, pp. 133–37; for an alternative interpretation, see Schulz, *The New Palaces*, pp. 23–27.

⁵⁰ Elena Bassi, *Architettura del Sei e Settecento a Venezia* (Naples, 1962); eadem, *Palazzi di Venezia: Admiranda urbis Venetae* (Venice, 1976).

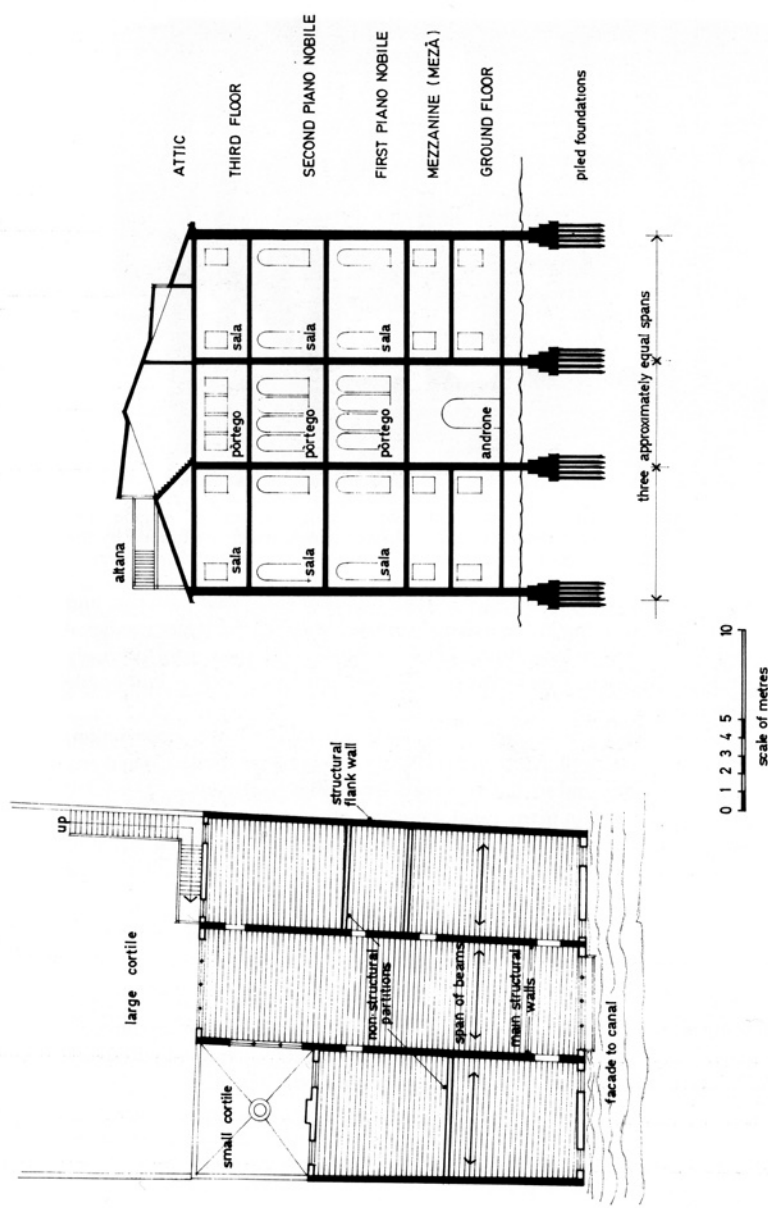


Figure 20.3. Plan (at first-floor level) and section of a typical Venetian palace, from Richard J. Goy, *Venetian Vernacular Architecture* (Cambridge, 1989).

known as the *scuole grandi*, are unique to Venice in their functions as well as their architectural form.⁵¹ These institutions struck a precarious balance between charity and display in their blending of secular and religious typologies.⁵² The huge assembly room furnished with an altar resembled the interior of a church or large chapel, though raised on the *piano nobile* like the *portego* of a palace. At the Scuola Nuova della Misericordia, this room even borrowed the vast dimensions of the Great Council Chamber in the Doge's Palace.⁵³ The smaller meeting room known as the *albergo*, for use by the *banca* or governing body, combined aspects of the monastic chapter house and the palace *camera*. Intense competition between the institutions encouraged continual cross-referencing, leading both to conformity and difference. The tension between benevolence and ostentation, as well as the regular rotation of officers, complicated their patronage of art and architecture.

Other typologies fostered conformity with examples outside Venice rather than within. In the case of the male religious orders, each monastery or friary formed part of an international network of institutions governed by shared religious aspirations and linked by continual personal and verbal communication.⁵⁴ The religious orders provided a vital conduit for the absorption of new ideas from outside the city. Nevertheless, the

⁵¹ Brian Pullan first analyzed the social functions of the *scuole* in his seminal work, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1971); brief histories of the important *scuole* are charted in the catalogue of Brown's Venetian narrative painting. Sohm, *The Scuola Grande di San Marco*, gives a useful account of the architectural functions of the *Scuola grande* on pp. 50–79.

⁵² See the chapter on the "Scuole grandi" in Manfredo Tafuri, *Venezia e il Rinascimento: Religione, scienza, architettura* (Turin, 1985), pp. 125–54; in English as *Venice and the Renaissance*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge, Mass./London, 1989), pp. 81–101.

⁵³ Deborah Howard, "La Scuola Grande della Misericordia di Venezia," in Fabbri, ed., *La Scuola Grande*, pp. 13–70, on p. 41.

⁵⁴ The study of the architecture of the religious orders is still patchy. No parallel exists for the early modern period to Herbert Dellwing's studies of the mendicant orders in the Veneto: *Studien zur Baukunst der Bettelorden im Veneto: die Gotik der monumentalen Gewölbebasiliken* (Berlin, 1970) and *Die Kirchenbaukunst des späten Mittelalters in Venetien* (Worms, 1990). A valuable contribution on the Observant Franciscans is Antonio Foscari and Manfredo Tafuri, *L'armonia e i conflitti: La chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna nella Venezia del '500* (Turin, 1983). Even such well-studied orders as the Jesuits have been relatively little explored in the case of Venice. See Mario Zanardi, "I 'domicilia' o centri operativi della Compagnia di Gesù: Venezia," in Mario Zanardi, ed., *I Gesuiti e Venezia: Momenti e problemi di storia veneziana della Compagnia di Gesù* (Padua, 1994), pp. 97–153; Howard, *Venice Disputed*, pp. 109–10. Much valuable information on the Counter Reformation orders, though not specifically concerning architecture, is to be found in William L. Barcham, *The Religious Paintings of Giambattista Tiepolo: Piety and Tradition in Eighteenth-Century Venice* (Oxford, 1989).

need to adapt innovations to local building practice assisted their visual integration into the townscape.

Similarly, the *fondaci*—merchants' lodgings with warehousing on the ground floor, both in Venice and in overseas trading concessions—are now recognized in their pan-Mediterranean context, equivalent to the *funduq*, *wikala*, (*k*)*han*, or *caravanserai* in various parts of the Islamic world.⁵⁵ Recent studies of the Ghetto and the quarters of immigrant communities in Venice have been complemented by a growing interest in the architecture of overseas colonies, both civic and military.⁵⁶ It is curious that the *hammam* or bath-house, to be found in most Venetian trading posts in the Levant, never took root in Venice. One cannot blame this neglect wholly on the difficulties of fresh water supply in the city, for many of the overseas bases were located in areas with similar water shortages.

Architectural Hierarchy

The hierarchy of typologies established in treatises such as those of Alberti and Scamozzi has been brought into question by the renewed interest in vernacular building. The pioneering study *Venezia minore* by Egle Renata Trincanato, first published in 1948, laid the groundwork for research in the field of popular housing.⁵⁷ A challenging question is the extent to which vernacular domestic architecture emulated palace building.⁵⁸ Recent studies have indicated that many of the structures that displayed the external features of palaces were in fact built as complexes of separate apartments for letting.⁵⁹ In these ingenious structures, each

⁵⁵ Ennio Concina, *Fondaci: Architettura, arte e mercatura tra Levante, Venezia, e Alemagna* (Venice, 1997); Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2003).

⁵⁶ Ennio Concina, Ugo Camerino, and Donatella Calabi, *La città degli ebrei: il ghetto di Venezia: Architettura e urbanistica* (Venice, 1991); Donatella Calabi, "Gli stranieri e la città," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 5 (1996): *Il Rinascimento. Società ed economia*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 913–46. Useful historical background is to be found in Brühnilde Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia 1300–1510* (Rome, 1997).

⁵⁷ Egle Renata Trincanato, *Venezia minore* (Venice, 1948).

⁵⁸ As proposed in Goy, *Venetian Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 150–71. For detailed studies of traditional middle-rank housing, see Maretto, *La casa veneziana*; and Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*, 1:334–52.

⁵⁹ Giorgio Gianighian and Paola Pavanini, *Dietro i palazzi: tre secoli di architettura minore a Venezia 1492–1803* (Venice, 1984); Giorgio Gianighian, "Building Castelforte," *ARQ: Architectural Research Quarterly* 9 (2005), 51–68.

tenant enjoyed all the components of a true palace—*portego*, *camere*, mezzanine, storerooms, attic rooms, and private staircase—interlocking with those of the other inhabitants in a complex three-dimensional spatial distribution. These multi-occupancy schemes, disguised as enormous palaces, became a potent expression of the “Myth of Venice.” Francesco Sansovino’s encomiastic statements that all houses in the city, no matter how simple, had windows of “the clearest and finest glass,” and that no visitable house was too poor to afford “walnut furniture, green draperies, carpets, pewter, copper, gold chains, silver forks and rings,” swelled the image of prosperity and equality that the Republic sought to convey.⁶⁰

The recognition of the city as a complex organism of interdependent parts has widened the fields of interest yet further. The study of the city’s commercial and naval infrastructure now benefits from the fruits of detailed archival research—especially in the case of the Rialto market and the Arsenal.⁶¹ Research on these centers has not only elucidated the building histories of their individual structures but also has set them in the context of similar complexes in other cities in Europe and further afield.⁶² In the field of utilitarian architecture work already carried out for the Trecento could serve as the basis for future studies.⁶³ Moorings, waterways and bridges, too, are now becoming better integrated into our view of the urban fabric.⁶⁴

The industrial architecture of Venice and its territories still needs further study. Outside the Arsenal, our knowledge is limited to certain specific examples, such as the ships’ biscuit factories on the Riva degli Schiavoni, though even these are largely known by their façades.⁶⁵ The number of patents for mechanical inventions granted by the Senate in the last few decades of the 16th century testifies to a remarkable concern for industrial

⁶⁰ Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fols 141v–142v.

⁶¹ Roberto Cessi and Annibale Alberti, *Rialto: L’isola, il ponte, il mercato* (Bologna, 1934); Donatella Calabi and Paolo Morachiello, *Rialto: Le fabbriche e il ponte 1514–1591* (Turin, 1987); Ennio Concina, *L’Arsenale della Repubblica di Venezia: Tecniche e istituzioni dal Medioevo all’età moderna* (Milan, 1984); Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*, 2:397–418.

⁶² Ennio Concina, *Arsenali e città nell’Occidente europeo* (Rome, 1987), Donatella Calabi, *The Market and the City: Square, Street and Architecture in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Marlene Klein (Aldershot, 2004).

⁶³ Michela Agazzi, “Edilizia funzionale veneziana del XIV secolo,” in Francesco Valcanover and Wolfgang Wolters, eds., *L’architettura gotica veneziana* (Venice, 2000), pp. 139–56; Dorigo, *Venezia romanica*, 2:418–35.

⁶⁴ A pioneering study is Donatella Calabi, “Canali, rive, approdi,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 12 (1991): *Il mare*, ed Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, pp. 135–43.

⁶⁵ Concina, *L’Arsenale*, p. 58; Donatella Calabi, “Una città ‘seduta sul mare,’” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 12: *Il mare*, ed Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 761–88, on p. 802.

innovation, using both water power and furnace technology.⁶⁶ In the period of this essay, Venice was a thriving center for the manufacture of glass, soap, ceramics, and a wide range of textiles, not to mention the mills and factories of the *terraferma*, but the architectural context of these activities has so far received little attention.⁶⁷ Because of Vitruvius's interest in machines, Daniele Barbaro included woodcuts of various devices for water management in his editions of 1556 and 1567, but early modern treatise writers showed little interest in the architectural fabric of mills and kilns.⁶⁸ The discussion of industrial buildings in print was largely confined to works on metallurgy, furnace technology, and fortification.⁶⁹

The military architecture of the Venetian Republic became progressively more technically sophisticated during the 16th century, as gunpowder technology advanced and defenses were modified to resist its threat. Gradually, during the course of the 16th century, the design of fortifications became the preserve of military engineers rather than architects.⁷⁰ In the city gates, such as those designed by Falconetto in Padua and Sanmicheli in Verona, ideology and classical references still held symbolic value. Sanmicheli's Fortezza di Sant'Andrea in the Venetian lagoon displayed its rusticated Doric frontage to the incoming seafarer, just as the city gates of Verona confronted the incomer by road.⁷¹ Elsewhere, however, fortifications now took the form of unspectacular low earthworks punctuated by angle bastions. In contrast to the picturesque walls and towers of medieval towns such as Montagnana, these ramparts created a rather unimpressive periphery to the townscape, though their star-shaped plans, as depicted in military treatises, held a geometrical and strategic fascination. The ideal fortress town of Palmanova, erected by the *Serenissima* on the eastern borders of Friuli at the end of the 16th century as a

⁶⁶ Pamela O. Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Present* (Baltimore/London, 2001), pp. 89–96.

⁶⁷ Pioneering studies are Ennio Concina, *Venezia nell'età moderna: Struttura e funzioni* (Venice, 1989); and Donatella Calabi, "Magazzini, fondaci, dogane," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 12: *Il mare*, ed Tenenti and Tucci, pp. 789–817.

⁶⁸ Daniele Barbaro, ed., *I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio* (Venice, 1567), pp. 463–64.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Vannoccio Biringuccio, *De la pirotechnia: Libri X* (Venice, 1540); and Bonaiuto Lorini, *Le fortificationi* (Venice, 1609).

⁷⁰ Useful overviews are André Chastel et al., *L'architettura militare veneta del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1988); and Ennio Concina and Elisabetta Molteni, *La fabbrica della fortezza: L'architettura militare di Venezia* (Verona, 2001).

⁷¹ See especially the city gates designed by Sanmicheli, analysed in Paul Davies and David Hemsoll, *Michele Sanmicheli* (Milan, 2004). On those of Falconetto in Padua, see Giuliana Mazzi, Adriano Verdi, and Vittorio Dal Piaz, *Le mura di Padova* (Padua, 2002).

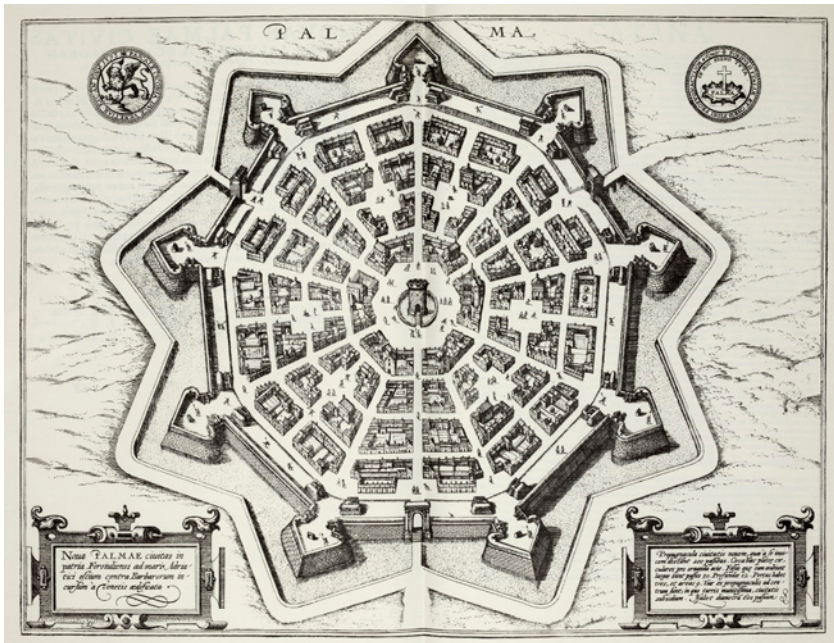


Figure 20.4. Plan of the Venetian fortress town of Palmanova in eastern Friuli, from Georg Braun and Frans Hogenburg's *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, woodcut (Amsterdam, 1598).

defense against Turkish invasion, never had to prove its military worth, but its form became celebrated across Europe through maps and engravings (Fig. 20.4).⁷² Such was the skill of the military strategists and architects in the 16th century that fortifications evolved relatively little over the next three centuries.

In the last few decades, research into public building in Venice's overseas colonies and on the *terraferma* has begun to allow a fuller understanding of the ways in which architecture both projected Venetian authority in the empire and sought the loyalty of the subject peoples.⁷³ As if to affirm the reorientation of the focus of study in this direction, a recent study of Venetian architecture of the Quattrocento devotes the first third of its

⁷² A useful introduction to the erection of Palmanova is Silvano Ghironi and Antonio Manno, *Palmanova: Storia, progetti e cartografia urbana (1593–1866)* (Padua, 1993). See also Howard, *Venice Disputed*, pp. 193–211 (with further bibliography).

⁷³ See, for example, Maria Georgopoulou, *Venice's Mediterranean Colonies: Architecture and Urbanism* (Cambridge, 2001).

text to the *stato da mar*.⁷⁴ Post-colonial theories of center and periphery, hybridity and local identity, now frame investigations into Venetian building in the oltremare, but it must be stressed that the Venetian “colonies” in the Islamic world were in reality concessionary trading posts where the rhetoric of colonial discourse has no place.

Style

During the first two-thirds of the 20th century, the history of architecture was treated as a history of style. A useful tool for connoisseurship, style describes and defines the visible characteristics manifested by a period, artistic center, or architect.⁷⁵ According to this model, tradition becomes the antithesis of style, that is, the conservative element in culture that resists stylistic change. Whereas tradition is static through time but varies geographically, style changes through time but is relatively independent of regional context. Modifications in style are led by artistic innovation from a perceived center, encountering varying degrees of resistance as they spread out, and this preoccupation with the new has led critics to attribute negative characteristics to tradition.

Because of the distinctive nature of Venetian building types, fostered by the conservative reuse of foundations and the relative social stability, innovations in architectural design tended to concern superficial stylistic changes: from Gothic to Renaissance and thence to Baroque and Rococo.⁷⁶ Interestingly, all these style names originated with negative connotations. In Venice, stylistic transformations manifested themselves in the design of windows, portals, altars, and interior decoration, and it was here that both artists and patrons concentrated their inventiveness.

⁷⁴ Ennio Concina, *Tempo novo: Venezia nel Quattrocento* (Venice, 2006).

⁷⁵ For general observations on style, see, for example, J. S. Ackerman, “Style,” article of 1963 repr. in his *Distance Points* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 1991); E. H. Gombrich, “Style,” *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* (New York, 1968), vol. 15, pp. 352–61; and Philip L. Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 2001).

⁷⁶ Essays on Venetian architecture of particular periods may be found in general studies of Italian architecture of the individual centuries, such as the Pelican History of Art volumes: Ludwig H. Heydenreich, *Architecture in Italy, 1400–1500*, rev. by Paul Davies (New Haven/London, 1996); Wolfgang Lotz, *Architecture in Italy, 1500–1600*, intro. by Deborah Howard (New Haven/London, 1995); Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750*, rev. by Joseph Connors and Jennifer Montagu, 3 vols (New Haven/London, 1999); and the more recent series of multi-author monographs entitled *Storia dell'architettura italiana* and edited by Francesco Dal Co (Milan, 1997–).

In its showpieces the Gothic of the early Quattrocento became increasingly ornate. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, however, a growing enthusiasm for the legacy of antiquity encouraged the introduction of rounded arches and classical ornament.⁷⁷ At first these two styles coexisted harmoniously, but with the arrival of the printed treatise in the 16th century, the theory of the classical orders grew in authority until the Gothic heritage finally died out. The Roman-orientated classicism of Sansovino, Serlio, and Sanmicheli, initiated during the dogeship of Doge Andrea Gritti, provided the perfect language for the Republic's bold assertion of its Roman roots and constitution (Fig. 20.5). Later in the century, Palladio's more idealized and monumental interpretation of antiquity created a new paradigm that was to command respect and emulation for the rest of the lifetime of the Republic. In the Seicento, Longhena's confident Baroque syntax reinterpreted Palladio's legacy in a more dynamic vein (Fig. 20.6).⁷⁸ Finally, in the 18th century a Palladian version of neoclassicism created demure exteriors combined with decorative Rococo interiors. Following the fall of the Republic in 1797, the classicism of the Academy continued to dominate the public's critical perspective.⁷⁹

It was to be the publication of John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53) that would revolutionize the public's view of Venetian architecture.⁸⁰ Ruskin unashamedly adopted a standpoint in direct opposition to academic classicism. Indeed, he deplored the architecture of Palladio, seen as the paragon ever since the architect's own death in 1580. To justify his personal preference for Venetian Gothic architecture, Ruskin created a historical framework that viewed the Renaissance as a period of moral decline. While his version of history is now regarded as subjective and warped, his architectural criticism remains a formidable legacy.

⁷⁷ John McAndrew, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 1980); Ralph Lieberman, *Renaissance Architecture in Venice 1450–1540* (London, 1982); Concina, *Tempo novo*.

⁷⁸ See Andrew Hopkins, "Venezia e il suo dominio," in Aurora Scotti Tosini, ed., *Storia dell'Architettura Italiana: il Seicento* (Milan, 2003), pp. 400–23; Andrew Hopkins, *Baldassare Longhena* (Milan, 2006); and Augusto Roca De Amicis, ed., *Storia dell'architettura nel Veneto: Il Seicento* (Venice, 2008). These works build on and supersede Bassi, *Architettura*.

⁷⁹ The need for measured surveys led to the lavish two-volume work Leopoldo Cicognara, Antonio Diedo, and Giovanni Antonio Selva, *Le fabbriche più conspicue di Venezia*, 2 vols (Venice, 1815–20), containing large-format engravings of the plans, elevations, and sections of the most prominent historic buildings in Venice.

⁸⁰ John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, 3 vols (London, 1851–53). See also Robert Hewison, *Ruskin on Venice: "The Paradise of Cities"* (New Haven/London, 2009).



Figure 20.5. Jacopo Sansovino, Mint (Zecca), Library and Loggetta, Piazzetta di San Marco, begun 1536–8 (photo: Cameraphoto, Venice).



Figure 20.6. Baldassare Longhena, Santa Maria della Salute, begun 1631 (photo: Deborah Howard).

Writing with energy and passion, Ruskin instilled a renewed admiration for the fine craftsmanship of the city's long-neglected Gothic heritage. His sensitive eye and attention to fine detail infuse every page of *The Stones of Venice*, its prose propelling the reader along like the waters of a mountain stream. Without the historical documentation needed to construct a reliable chronology of Venetian Gothic, Ruskin used his own first-hand observation of medieval architectural detail to construct an evolutionary sequence. In order to give intellectual rigor to his studies, Ruskin devised a series of "orders" of Gothic architecture, corresponding to the transition from Romanesque to late Gothic (Fig. 20.7), just as Thomas Rickman had classified the phases of English Gothic architecture in 1817.⁸¹ Ruskin's approach needs to be situated in the context of the 19th century's obsession with evolutionary theory and classification. In defining his "orders" of Venetian Gothic architecture, he hoped to provide the subject with a theoretical basis comparable to that of the classical tradition. Although in reality the middle "orders" of the sequence did not evolve in an orderly fashion, the scheme still retains its usefulness for describing and dating Gothic domestic buildings.

Ruskin's *Stones* ushered in another highly significant innovation: the use of the color lithograph. Ever since the first illustrated treatises of the early 16th century, architectural literature had been printed in black and white. It was Ruskin who renewed critical interest in the polychromy of the townscape. The process of chromo-lithography, originally pioneered for banknotes and playing cards, allowed his watercolor studies to be translated into print—not as perfected, tidied-up versions but enlivened by the intensity of the hues and the picturesque signs of erosion and damage. Ruskin not only brought about a revolution in public taste; he also challenged the theory and practice of building conservation. Appalled by the Austrians' radical restoration of St Mark's, he pressed for a more respectful approach to the historical fabric, aiming to halt further deterioration rather than to replace damaged elements with new imitations.

Despite Ruskin's efforts, modern studies of the architecture of early Renaissance Venice still tend to dwell on the city's perceived delay in grasping the principles of Vitruvian classicism.⁸² This Vasarian viewpoint fails to take account of the cultural independence and commercial strength of

⁸¹ Thomas Rickman, *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of English Architecture* (London, 1817).

⁸² This is a perspective that underlies McAndrew, *Venetian Architecture*. See the perceptive review by Debra Pincus in *The Art Bulletin* 65 (1983), 342–46.

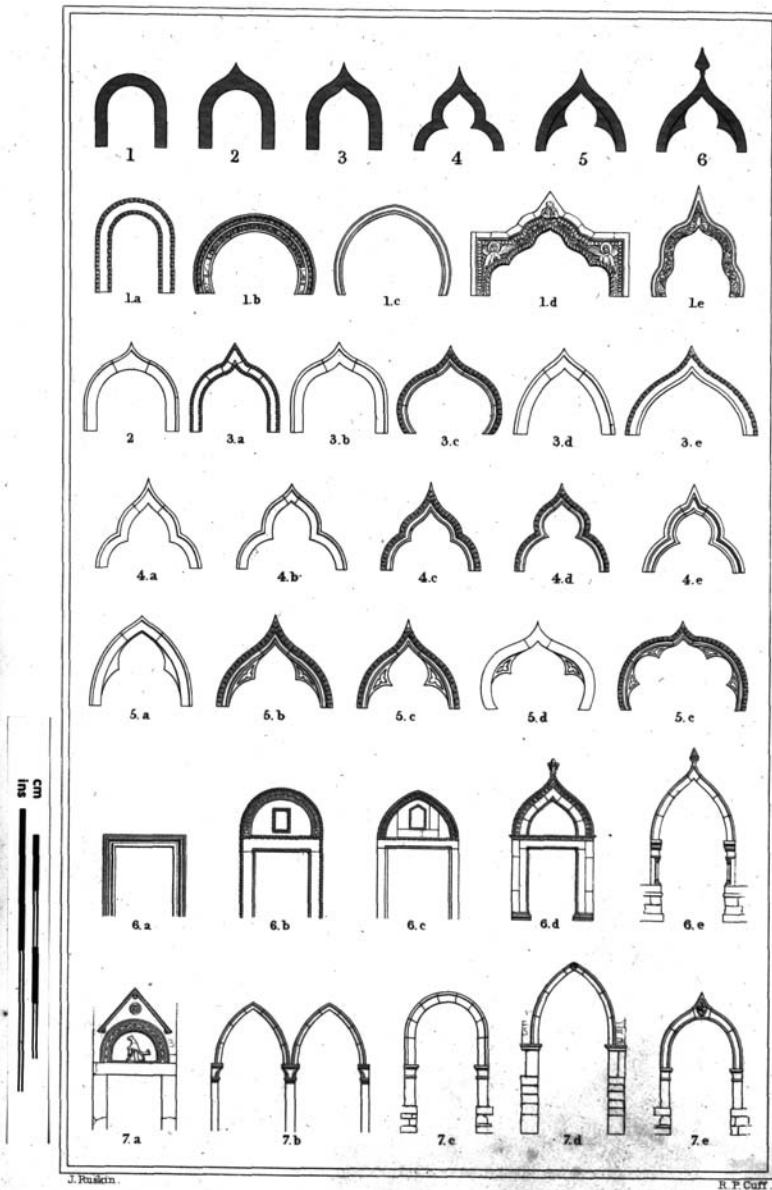


Figure 20.7. John Ruskin, The 'Orders' of Gothic Architecture, from *The Stones of Venice*, 3 vols (London, 1851–3).

Quattrocento Venice, for the Gothic style in architecture coincided with the height of Venice's power and prosperity.⁸³ With its main trading links aligned towards the Islamic world in the east and Germany in the north, the vocabulary of Venice was continually enriched by contact with visual cultures based on the pointed arch, profuse vegetal ornament, and intricate two-dimensional relief carving.⁸⁴

It is only in the past two decades that this wider cross-cultural perspective has come to the fore in academic debate.⁸⁵ Venice had no reason to emulate the achievements of Brunelleschi and his contemporaries in Florence. In the very years in which Michelozzo was building the Palazzo Medici in Florence, Doge Foscari erected his huge family palace in Venice, highlighting the city's pride in its Gothic heritage.⁸⁶ As the largest palace in the city when Francesco Sansovino published his guidebook in 1581, Ca' Foscari continued to house high-prestige visitors long after Roman classicism had made its triumphant entry onto the Venetian scene.⁸⁷

Architectural Patronage

The impact of Marxism's focus on the economic and political context, combined with the Modernists' enthusiasm for functionalism, ushered in a growing interest in architectural patronage from the 1970s onwards. Research into patronage illuminates a number of important factors: the function and later use of buildings; construction history; the methods of finance; and institutional or dynastic structures. Patronage studies benefit especially from the nature of the documentation, but its interpretation needs careful reassessment, for while powerful individuals and institutions alike often leave copious evidence of their activities, it must be recognized that they themselves influenced the content and perspective of the sources. More recently, the impact of post-modernist theory has encouraged a

⁸³ This is underlined by Ralph Lieberman who chose a Gothic palace for the cover of his *Renaissance Architecture in Venice*.

⁸⁴ These influences are discussed in Howard, *Venice & the East*; and Bernard Aikema and Beverly Louise Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian*, exh. cat. (London, 1999).

⁸⁵ See, for example, Howard, *Venice & the East*; Stefano Carboni, ed., *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797*, exh. cat. (New York, 2007) (also available in French and in shortened form in Italian); and Concina, *Tempo novo*.

⁸⁶ Dennis Romano, *The Likeness of Venice: A Life of Doge Francesco Foscari 1373–1457* (New Haven/London, 2007), pp. 245–53.

⁸⁷ Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fol. 149r–v.

more subtle deconstruction of the evidence. Issues of class, gender, and ethnicity have entered the debate, and historians have begun to consider how patrons seek to fashion identities through architectural patronage. The role of the viewer as the “reader” of the agenda presented by the building has also begun to receive attention.

Yet patronage studies bring their own limitations. The Marxist legacy tended to foster an over-deterministic approach to architectural design, perceiving the architect as propelled by inexorable social, political, and economic forces. The architect-patron relationship may be elucidated in considerable detail, but it is skewed by the bias towards the patronage which generated the primary-source material in the first place. Unless a substantial body of drawings survives, it is a challenging task, in a study based on patronage, to give due attention to artistic development and design issues, or to assess the more conceptual aspects of the design philosophy. Nonetheless, the multiple nuances conferred by complex patronage situations may add a revelatory new dimension—even to an architect as well studied as Palladio—when based on ground-breaking research.⁸⁸ The inherent interdisciplinarity of patronage-based studies ensures their lasting value to scholarship.

Architects and Proti

The architect’s monograph, enlivened by its human interest, focuses attention on the development of an individual designer’s personal style and achievement. One of the first architects in Venice to become the subject of a modern monograph was Mauro Codussi, whose career had been almost entirely forgotten since his death in 1504 until his identity was rediscovered by Paoletti at the end of the 19th century.⁸⁹ Thanks to his mastery of space and light, Codussi’s economical style appealed to Modernist taste and theory. At the same time, the monographic format tends to privilege the better documented architect, educated in the classical tradition, over the more technically trained local *proto*. Pietro Lombardo’s career ran parallel to that of Codussi, but his refined, erudite use of classical ornament, executed with consummate skill, appeals less

⁸⁸ This is impressively demonstrated by Tracy E. Cooper, *Palladio’s Venice* (New Haven/London, 2005).

⁸⁹ Luigi Angelini, *Codussi* (Milan, 1945); Lionello Puppi and Loredana Olivato Puppi, *Mauro Codussi e l’architettura veneziana del Primo Rinascimento* (Milan, 1977).

to the modern aesthetic. Pietro still lacks a full architectural monograph, although his son Tullio has benefited from the fruits of recent scholarship, mainly devoted to his sculpture.⁹⁰

The careers of Sansovino, Sanmicheli, and Palladio, preserved for posterity in the published biographies of Vasari and later Temanza, have long attracted monographic study.⁹¹ Both Vasari and Francesco Sansovino devoted long passages to praising the technical achievements of Jacopo Sansovino—just as Vasari had praised the Medici architect Michelozzo's triumphant restoration of the foundations of a Venetian palace while the family slept undisturbed upstairs—as if to underline the supremacy of the Tuscan tradition.⁹² During the second half of the 20th century, the study of Palladio achieved a unique prominence: it is said that he has attracted more publications than any other architect except Frank Lloyd Wright.⁹³ The study of Palladio's architecture, raised to a new academic level by the four richly documented volumes by Giangiorgio Zorzi in 1959–69, benefits in particular from the survival of a remarkable corpus of architectural drawings, most of them now in England, especially the major collection held by

⁹⁰ Anna Pizzati and Matteo Ceriana, eds., *Tullio Lombardo: Documenti e testimonianze* (Verona, 2008); Alison Luchs, et al., *Tullio Lombardo and Venetian High Renaissance Sculpture*, exh. cat. (New Haven/London, 2009). See the fundamental study of Pietro Lombardo's life and career by Matteo Ceriana, 'Lombardo, Pietro', in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 65 (Rome, 2009), available on-line as [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-lombardo_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-lombardo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); and also Deborah Howard, "Space, Light and Ornament in Venetian Architecture: Pietro Lombardo Reconsidered," in Blake de Maria and Mary Frank, eds., *Reflections on Renaissance Venice; A Celebration of Patricia Fortini Brown* (Milan, 2013), pp. 94–103.

⁹¹ Because the attribution of buildings according to stylistic criteria is more difficult than that of painting and sculpture, relatively few monographs on architects emerged from the golden age of connoisseurship in the mid-20th century. The large square-format volumes on published by Marsilio in the late 1960s and early 1970s brought the first modern architectural monographs on Jacopo Sansovino by Manfredo Tafuri (Padua, 1969) and Michele Sanmicheli (Padua, 1971) by Lionello Puppi. These volumes drew together existing knowledge, analyzing the architecture within a framework of Marxist criticism. Excited by the new possibilities of the telephoto lens, their photographers gave new prominence to unfamiliar details, but also created some deceptive foreshortening effects. Meanwhile the comprehensive researches of Giangiorgio Zorzi led to the publication by Neri Pozza in Vicenza of four richly documented volumes on Andrea Palladio's work in Venice and the Veneto. See below, note 94. The fruits of recent decades of documentary research have been synthesized in the new series of architectural monographs published by Electa.

⁹² Vasari, *Le vite*, 2:434–35, 7:505; Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fol. 144r. These texts are analyzed in Deborah Howard, "Renovation and Innovation in Venetian Architecture," *Scroope: Cambridge Architecture Journal* 6 (1994), 66–74.

⁹³ Deborah Howard, "Four Centuries of Literature on Palladio," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39 (1980), 224–41.

the Royal Institute of British Architects in London.⁹⁴ The efforts of the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura in Vicenza, founded in 1958 to promote the study of Palladio, have not only stimulated academic research and debate through conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and publications, but also have encouraged the restoration of long-neglected buildings.

Following in the footsteps of Elena Bassi, other authors have produced monographs on architects of the 17th and 18th centuries, but although Scamozzi, Longhena, Gaspari, and Sardi now profit from new scholarly research, the situation in the case of individual Settecento architects is more patchy.⁹⁵ The interdisciplinary perspective of the pioneering new series, *Storia dell'architettura nel Veneto*, promoted by the Palladio center in Vicenza, offers a hybrid of thematic, typological and monographic approaches, launched by the first stimulating volume on *Il Seicento* in 2008.⁹⁶

Republic and Empire

As the longest-lived republic in the history of Europe, Venice was proud of its constitution based on that of ancient Rome. On the one hand, Republican values, codified in chronicles and printed texts on political history and theory, molded the city's townscape in ways that need careful analysis. On the other, Venice was also an empire, proud of its *terraferma* possessions and of its network of overseas colonies. The material legacy of antiquity on the *terraferma* and in the colonies—whether extant monuments, decorative fragments, capitals, precious marble columns, sculptures, or inscriptions—nourished a rich tradition of antiquarian study and collecting from the medieval period onwards.⁹⁷ Venetian despoliation

⁹⁴ Giangiorgio Zorzi, *Disegni delle antichità di Andrea Palladio* (Venice, 1959); idem, *Le opere pubbliche e i palazzi privati di Andrea Palladio* (Venice, 1964); idem, *Le chiese e i ponti di Andrea Palladio* (Vicenza, 1966); idem, *Le ville e i teatri di Andrea Palladio* (Vicenza, 1969).

⁹⁵ Bassi, *Architettura*. On Scamozzi, see especially Franco Barbieri and Guido Beltramini, eds., *Vincenzo Scamozzi. 1548–1616*, exh. cat. (Venice, 2003). On Longhena, see in particular, Andrew Hopkins, *Santa Maria della Salute: Architecture and Ceremony in Baroque Venice* (Cambridge, 2002; published in English by Yale University Press); Martina Frank, *Baldassare Longhena* (Venice, 2004); and Andrew Hopkins, *Baldassare Longhena (1597–1682)* (Milan, 2006). A useful short study is Paola Piffaretti, *Giuseppe Sardi architetto ticinese nella Venezia del Seicento* (Bellinzona, 1996). For the 18th century, Antonio Massari, *Giorgio Massari architetto veneziano del Settecento* (Vicenza, 1971) offers general coverage. A recent update is provided by Martina Frank, ed., *Da Longhena a Selva: Un'idea di Venezia a dieci anni dalla scomparsa di Elena Bassi* (Bologna, 2011).

⁹⁶ De Amicis, ed., *Il Seicento*.

⁹⁷ The fundamental study of this topic is Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity* (New Haven/London, 1996).

of archaeological remains in the colonies for reuse in Venice has a long history, justified in a letter of Aretino to Sansovino in 1550:

I am certain that Rome, more than any other city, would be happy to see that [Pola] had been stripped of the miraculous artifice of its [antique] marbles, with the intention of adorning Venice, her cherished and sacred daughter.⁹⁸

The Republic took pride in its supposed foundation by refugees from the last vestiges of the Roman Empire, a narrative reiterated over the centuries in chronicles and histories.⁹⁹ In architectural terms, republican ideals found their expression in the writings of the ancients. For example, Suetonius's remark that the first emperor, Augustus, found Rome a city of sun-dried brick and left it a city of marble, bequeathed to humanist readers the view that precious marbles held imperial associations whereas brick denoted republican austerity.¹⁰⁰ Dedicated to Augustus, Vitruvius's treatise described an era before the construction of most of the surviving monuments of imperial Rome. As a result, Renaissance architects such as Serlio and Palladio, in their studies of the archaeological remains of ancient Rome, found a mismatch between the writings of Vitruvius and the evidence of the imperial remains themselves.

As the "Myth of Venice" became codified in print in the 16th century, its architectural expression had to confront the divergence of imperial and republican ideals.¹⁰¹ In Piazza San Marco, the huge program of urban renewal initiated by Jacopo Sansovino under Doge Gritti adopted a shamelessly imperial idiom, based on the classicism of ancient and modern Rome and underpinned by architectural theory (Fig. 20.5).¹⁰² Even within the private realm, the grandiose imperial language of Sansovino's Palazzo Corner and Sanmicheli's Palazzo Grimani alluded to their role as public ceremonial scenery adorning the banks of the Grand Canal, as well as to the power, wealth, and Roman leanings of the two families. Imperial pretension could, however, be deemed inappropriate. It has been suggested

⁹⁸ Aretino, *Lettere sull'arte*, 2:321–22.

⁹⁹ Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, pp. 11–45.

¹⁰⁰ Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, "Life of Augustus," in *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. Robert Graves (Harmondsworth, 1957), pp. 51–108, ch. 28 on p. 66.

¹⁰¹ On the iconography of the "Myth of Venice," see especially Rosand, *The Myths of Venice*.

¹⁰² See especially Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino*, pp. 8–47; Manfredo Tafuri, ed., *"Renovatio Urbis": Venezia nell'età di Andrea Gritti, 1523–1538* (Rome, 1984); Manuela Morresi, *Piazza San Marco: Istituzioni, poteri e architettura a Venezia nel primo Cinquecento* (Milan, 1999); Morresi, *Jacopo Sansovino*, pp. 182–227.

that the full-blown classicism of Sansovino's design for the Scuola Grande della Misericordia overstepped the social rank of a confraternity of *cittadini* and that this failure of decorum may account for its unfinished state.¹⁰³ At the same time, it could be argued that this remarkable statement of artistic ambition by the citizen class may have itself stimulated the patrician oligarchy to initiate the *renovatio* in Piazza San Marco a few years afterwards.

Whereas "imperial" architectural projects were mainly confined to Piazza San Marco and the Grand Canal, on peripheral sites the myth of the simplicity of the first settlers encouraged a simpler mode of expression. A crucial text for the ideals of republican architecture was the letter of the Roman official Cassiodorus, written in 537 C.E., which claimed that all Venetians "have abundance only of fish; rich and poor live together in equality. The same food and similar houses are shared by all; wherefore they cannot envy each other's hearths and so they are free from the vices that rule the world."¹⁰⁴ Mentioned by Sanudo and published in full in Sansovino's guidebook of 1581, Cassiodorus's text orchestrated the "memory" of the city's foundation myth.¹⁰⁵ Even wealthy members of the ruling elite sought to emulate the simple lagoon life in their palaces on the margins of the city—the palaces of Doge Andrea Gritti, the Senator Leonardo Moro and Doge Leonardo Donà (Fig. 20.8) all display reticent exteriors in local vernacular language.¹⁰⁶

Town and Country

Ever since the first edition of Pompeo Molmenti's lively work *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata*, first published in 1880, curiosity about life within the walls of Venetian houses has continued to grow.¹⁰⁷ The difficulty in gaining access to domestic interiors, combined with the need to subdivide and modernize dwellings has highlighted the threat to the preservation

¹⁰³ Tafuri, ed., *Venezia e il Rinascimento*, p. 144.

¹⁰⁴ As cited in Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice* (New Haven/London, 2002), p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Sanudo, *De origine*, pp. 11, 14; Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fols 207v–208r.

¹⁰⁶ Foscari and Tafuri, *L'armonia e i conflitti*, pp. 24–27; Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino*, pp. 146–54; Giulia Ceriana Sebgondi, "Un doge e il suo manifesto: Il palazzo di Leonardo Donà (1536–1612) alle Fondamenta Nuove a Venezia," *Annali di architettura* 14 (2002), 231–50.

¹⁰⁷ Pompeo Molmenti, *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata dalle origini alla caduta della Repubblica* (1880) expanded into 3 vols in the 4th edition (Bergamo, 1905–08).



Figure 20.8. Palazzo Donà, Fondamenta Nuove, Venice, begun 1610 (photo: Deborah Howard).

of evidence regarding the distribution and functions of rooms and led to the destruction or deterioration of many aspects of interior decoration.¹⁰⁸ The Modernist emphasis on space, light, and volume, too, has led to a damaging neglect of the study of ornament and craftsmanship.

More positively, over the past few decades, the burgeoning interest in material culture and micro-history has encouraged the close scrutiny of household inventories.¹⁰⁹ When an individual died in Venice, his or her goods were often itemized as part of the probate procedures, while overseas household possessions were inventoried for repatriation to the heirs. These inventories provide an enticing view through the keyhole, exposing the cultural spectrum of the owner—whether in terms of intellectual

¹⁰⁸ Wolfgang Wolters, *Architektur und Ornament: venezianischer Bauschmuck der Renaissance* (Munich, 2005).

¹⁰⁹ See especially Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven/London, 2004); and De Maria, *Becoming Venetian*. For Venetians overseas, see Francesco Bianchi and Deborah Howard, "Life and Death in Damascus: The Material Culture of Venetians in the Syrian Capital in the Mid-Fifteenth Century," *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 45 (2003), 233–99.

pursuits, the collection of works of art, recreation, or entertainment. In architectural terms, the location of objects in inventories can cast light on the use of individual rooms, although it is important to remember that in the immediate aftermath of a death, objects were often moved around. Furniture and clothing help to give substance to the social identity of the subject, often illuminating the geographical provenance of the objects. The profusion of inventories of women's possessions helps to illuminate the gendering of architectural space, but the study of inventories needs to be approached cautiously, for a woman's possessions often listed only those items specified in her dowry at the time of her marriage.

The relationship between family life in the city and the *villeggiatura* enjoyed by both Venetians and their subjects on the *terraferma* now benefits from a more subtle analysis, thanks to recent scholarship and exhibitions.¹¹⁰ Even the suburban villas of the islands of the lagoon have become better known.¹¹¹ Whereas images of country recreations such as banqueting, music-making, and hunting illuminate the more agreeable aspects of villa life, the fruits of economic history now go much further towards explaining the true extent of the period's agricultural revolution. It has been shown, for example, that many of Palladio's patrons were actively involved in silk production and manufacture.¹¹² This previously unrecognized dimension helps to establish their close contacts with Venetian commerce and to explain their access to capital for building. The records of the purchase and sale of farmland now need to be analyzed in a more subtle way, because of the growing realization of the extent to which Venetian landowners offered mortgage loans to their neighbors by "buying" small parcels of land on a temporary basis.¹¹³

The recent explorations of private life and its relationship to architecture have not yet extended fully enough to the 17th and 18th centuries. Venice in this period still suffers from its characterization as a city dominated by masked balls, carnival antics, theatrical events, gambling, courtesans, and

¹¹⁰ Guido Beltrami and Howard Burns, eds., *Andrea Palladio e la villa veneta da Petrarca a Carlo Scarpa*, exh. cat. (Venice, 2005).

¹¹¹ Goy, *Venetian Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 172–250; Patrick Monahan, "Sanudo and the Venetian villa suburbana," *Annali di architettura* 21 (2009), 45–64.

¹¹² Edoardo Demo, "Le attività economiche dei committenti vicentini di Palladio. Nuove suggestioni sulla base dei recenti ritrovamenti archivistici," in Franco Barbieri et al., *Palladio 1508–2008: Il simposio del cinquecentenario* (Venice, 2008), pp. 25–28.

¹¹³ Brian Pullan, "The Occupations and Investments of the Venetian Nobility in the Middle and Late Sixteenth Century," in J. R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1974), pp. 379–408, on pp. 388–89; Lucia Bullian, "La villa come centro di credito rurale: il caso dei Barbaro a Maser," in Renzo Derosas, ed., *Villa: Siti e contesti* (Treviso, 2006), pp. 211–20.

villeggiatura. Further study of the industries, religious life, and intellectual activities of the last two centuries of the Republic would help to create a more balanced view of the period and its architectural fabric.

Devotion and Memorialization

The impact of the fall of the Republic on ecclesiastical life has already been mentioned, and its full implications must be carefully borne in mind, for it was at this point that the understanding of the functions of different types of churches fell into near oblivion. In the early years of the 19th century, some churches were transformed into sterilized art-historical “monuments”: the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, for instance, was stripped of all its nave altars and post-Quattrocento fittings.¹¹⁴ Others were converted into factories, munition stores, or prisons.¹¹⁵ Churches designed for use by mendicant friars, such as the Frari, San Francesco della Vigna, and the Redentore, became parish churches, while many altarpieces were either removed or transferred to other locations. The efforts of medieval Venice to fashion itself as a Holy City—the first stage on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem—were forgotten, as relics and precious liturgical objects were moved or lost.¹¹⁶

At the same time, St Mark's became the cathedral of Venice in 1806, a function formerly held by the church of San Pietro di Castello on the eastern margins of the city. Originally both a palatine chapel and a shrine for the evangelist's body, the building of St Mark's had been modeled on the Justinian church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople (destroyed in 1457). As Martino da Canal remarked in the later 13th century, “having built such a beautiful church, the Venetians decided that it should be embellished every year for ever and ever, and this is what they do.”¹¹⁷ Thus the church, though deeply rooted in Byzantine tradition, was continually modified by later accretions and alterations that continued throughout the lifetime of the Republic. In the 16th century, a major modification to the interior was implemented by the *proto* Jacopo Sansovino at the request of

¹¹⁴ Deborah Howard, “The Church of the Miracoli in Venice and Pittoni's ‘St Jerome’ altar-piece,” *Burlington Magazine* 131 (1989), 684–92.

¹¹⁵ Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia scomparsa*, 2 vols (Milan, 1977).

¹¹⁶ Howard, *Venice & the East*, pp. 189–216.

¹¹⁷ Cited in Howard, *Venice & the East*, p. 99.

Doge Andrea Gritti.¹¹⁸ Overweight and suffering from gout, Gritti became unable to climb the steep narrow stairs to the octagonal porphyry-rimmed pulpit just outside the rood-screen. In consequence, Sansovino installed a new ducal throne in the chancel, surrounded by new seating for the highest dignitaries of state. The clergy were thus forced to move to the back of the chancel near the high altar. The transfer of the ducal party into the presbytery gave added sanctity to the role of the doge.

Recent attention to the relation of liturgy to its architectural setting has opened up new approaches to the study of ecclesiastical space.¹¹⁹ Investigations into institutional patronage, complemented by new research in religious history, have encouraged a more interdisciplinary approach to research in ecclesiastical architecture. Church interiors may now more easily be viewed as settings for devotional practices and cults, their spaces brought to life by music and liturgy. The interaction between lay and religious patronage, too, informs the study of tombs and monuments, chapel decoration and works of art. Francesco Sansovino's list of the ducal *andate*—the doge's annual visits to 11 particular churches—highlights their former prominence in the liturgical calendar, but even the surviving ceremonial books are often tantalizingly reticent about the spatial choreography of these visits.¹²⁰ Lively snippets in Sanudo's diaries record some of the uses of individual churches, and the apostolic and patriarchal visitations of the Counter Reformation help to reconstruct devotional practices, but the positions of musicians, clergy, and singers are not easily disentangled.¹²¹

* * *

Venice and the Veneto offer unrivaled opportunities to the architectural historian in their historic patrimony and rich archival resources. The profusion of research over the last few decades has opened up new approaches, ranging from micro-history to broader thematic studies, and from theoretical enquiries to surveys of building fabric. But architectural history is far more than the history of architecture: in urban life it is the

¹¹⁸ Deborah Howard, *Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice: Architecture, Music, Acoustics* (New Haven/London, 2009), pp. 26–42, with further bibliography.

¹¹⁹ Jorg Stabenow, ed., *Lo spazio e il culto: Relazioni tra l'edificio ecclesiale e il suo uso liturgico dal XV al XVII secolo* (Venice, 2006); Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven/London, 2007); Howard and Moretti, *Sound and Space*.

¹²⁰ Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, fols. 193v–206v.

¹²¹ Howard and Moretti, *Sound and Space*.

setting for all human activity, and it is the potential to weave architecture into the warp of broader historical discourse that creates exciting research possibilities for the young scholars of the future.

A Note on Sources

Giulio Lorenzetti, *Venezia e il suo estuario* (Rome, 1935); and in English *Venice and its Lagoon*, trans. John Guthrie (Trieste, 1960), is still an essential resource for scholars and serious tourists. See also Richard J. Goy, *Venice: An Architectural Guide* (New Haven/London, 2010). Synthetic studies of Venetian architecture, intended for the general reader, the educated visitor, and the university student include Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice* (London, 1980 and 1987), rev. and enl. edn. (New Haven/London, 2002); Richard J. Goy, *Venice: The City and its Architecture* (London, 1997); and Ennio Concina, *A History of Venetian Architecture*, trans. Judith Landry (Cambridge, 1998). In all cases these extend to modern times, although Goy's book is arranged typologically rather than by period.

This essay cannot offer a complete literature review of early modern Venetian architecture, but further bibliography may be found in the core works listed in the notes.

ART IN VENICE, 1400–1600¹

Wolfgang Wolters

In art history, the period from 1400 to 1600 is characterized by paradigm shifts. Works created before 1450/60 are usually subsumed under the term “Gothic,” while the subsequent period that lasted until 1600 is rarely designated *tout court* as “Renaissance.” Thus, a “manneristic crisis” (c.1540–50) is delineated, and after the Council of Trent, one speaks of art in the Age of the Counter-Reformation (or the Catholic Reform).² Venetian artists, like their colleagues in important cities such as Siena, had their own way to react or not to react at all to what had been developed at the beginning of the 15th century in Florence. In Florence, Michelozzo built important ecclesiastical buildings in the gothic style decades after the first works of Tuscan Renaissance were created. One of the results of a Tusco-centric art history is to measure local phenomena in cities such as Venice against what was done in Florence. In Venice, gothic palaces were built for political reasons and as a bold “statement” of their owners, until the end of the 15th century. Style had become a political statement.

Sculpture

The usual separation between “sculpture” and “architecture,” or art history and architectural history, only seldom corresponds with reality. In their capacities as both architects and sculptors, Bartolomeo Buon (c.1400–c.1464/67) and Antonio Rizzo (c.1440–after 1499), as well as Jacopo Sansovino (1486–1570) and Girolamo Campagna (1549–1626),

¹ The author feels very much indebted to Catherine Framm (Berlin) for the perfect translation.

² The obvious purpose of a historical handbook is to highlight the questions related to the various fields of research which the book introduces. Although the concentration solely on Venice, the metropolis, is unavoidable due to limited space, certainly Venice was far more than what one today simply calls the *centro storico*. The art in the major cities of the mainland from Brescia to Treviso and in the *stato da mar* would be another complex and fascinating topic. Local artistic traditions and Venetian “export” of artists and works of art coexisted in the cities of the Venetian dominions, as did local pride (and traditions) and political reality (the “Venetian liberty”) shown by the presence and the *palazzi* of Venetian *capitani* and *rettori* and their sculptural and pictorial decorations.

combined figures on tombs, altars, and on church and palace façades with “architectonic” elements. Figures and “ornamental” sculptures are, in very many cases, conceptually integrative parts of an “architectonic” work—their forms are also contextually determined. Pietro Lombardo’s Church of S. Maria dei Miracoli (since 1481) and Jacopo Sansovino’s Procurator’s Palace (*Libreria*) on the Piazzetta (since 1537) are prominent examples of this.

The regulations of the guilds and the practices of stonemason workshops (*tagliapietra*) enabled the *ad hoc* employment of craftsmen, among them experienced masters, to temporarily work in different workshops; in this way, extensive commissions could be coped with in a manageable period of time. Attributions are too often based upon the mistaken premise that sculptors and painters executed—with their own hands—every single part of any work that originated in their workshop. In a 1550 letter to the duke of Ferrara, Jacopo Sansovino confessed that he himself almost never wielded the chisel anymore. At the latest from mid-century onwards, he delegated the completion of many of his commissions to Danese Cattaneo (c.1509–73), Alessandro Vittoria (1524–1608), Pietro Grazoli da Salò (?), and other, less gifted, sculptors who often signed their works. The *Giganti*, erected in 1567 on the eponymous staircase in the courtyard of the Doge’s Palace, were carried out by seven sculptors under the direction of Jacopo Sansovino. As early as the 15th century, most contracts lacked a clause stipulating that the director of the workshop was required to personally execute the commission. Thus, in individual cases, arguments as to the degree of artistry and considerations concerning the formal peculiarities of a work determine whether or not the employees were working from their own ideas (designs) within the formal limitations tolerated by the workshop.

The simultaneous coexistence of individual “styles” was accepted as the rule in the case of extensive works. Not only the Virtues on Bartolomeo Buon’s Porta della Carta of the Doge’s Palace (1438–42), conceptualized and executed by four different gifted sculptors, but also Pietro Lombardo’s rich decoration of S. Maria dei Miracoli, and Sansovino’s commissions give evidence of this great variety. In the Venice of 1490, as many as 126 Lombard stonemasons were competing with 40 Venetians. The preference of art history and the art trade for “great” names results in a disinclination to draw the inevitable conclusions from such documents. Thus, too often, obvious attempts at approximating the workshop director’s style, executed within the framework of a workshop composed *ad hoc* and for a fixed term, were glossed over—and not only in the works of Lombardo

(of Pietro (c.1435–1515) and his sons Tullio (c.1455–1532) and Antonio (c.1458–c.1516)) or Antonio Rizzo. Modern catalogues of works attributed to Giovanni and Bartolomeo Buon, Antonio Rizzo, or to Pietro Lombardo and his sons Tullio and Antonio include imitations of the style practiced by the leading artist and owner of the workshop by other professional but less gifted collaborators chosen *ad hoc*. These stonecarvers followed in most cases what they considered to be the style of the *capobottega* [workshop head]. They tried to achieve at least a superficial similarity with the works of the *capobottega*. The result was what is often called *Werkstattstil* [workshop style].

The attribution of ornamental elements also requires logically comprehensible arguments. This applies especially to ornamental vegetation. Pietro and especially Tullio Lombardo were well known for their mastery of ornamentation *all'antica*, abilities that Pomponius Gauricus (1504) especially pointed out in respect to Tullio. Later, the architect Sebastiano Serlio (in his *IV Book*, Venice, 1537) subsumed under the term “ornament”—which today has quite different associations—tasks such as chimneys, doors, iron grates, façade paintings, floors, and ceiling decorations that could be designed not only by specialists, among them sculptors and painters, but also personally by the architects overseeing the building. As parts of a functional and aesthetic whole—a whole in which buildings, pictures, and sculptures are almost always privileged and subject to individual examination—the above-named tasks threaten to escape the view of academic architectural history. The consequences for their preservation and care are evident. In 1537, Serlio demanded that architects at least guide and, where necessary, intervene as moderators in those cases where they could not personally design the building's ornamentation. Here, the protection of façades from the liberties that the majority of the painters took was a matter of concern as well. The painting of the façade of the Palace d'Anna on the Canal Grande (1531–32) by Giovanni Antonio Pordenone (1484–1539) was immediately a tourist attraction as well as a triumph of the painter in his transformation of the architect's work.

In the 15th century, wooden statues were always painted, at least partially, as were stone statues. The separation of the guilds from each other gave painters the possibility to transform and refine sculpted works. The expectation that this would happen could influence the quality of the detailing and finishing of the outer surfaces by the sculptors or woodcarvers. How great the differences between painted (and only thus, realistic) sculptures and those sculptures that were in a state of preparation for painting is evidenced by the especially well-preserved sarcophagus of

Doge Andrea Contarini (died 1382) in the cloister of St Stefano. The polychrome figures and other elements were, in the case of altars and tombs, often supplied with a painted frame, or else the place where they were to be situated was specially painted, which in the case of both of the Vivarini altars in S. Zaccaria was a flat niche. Antonio Rizzo's statue of the striding Doge Niccolo Tron (died 1476) on his tomb (S. Maria dei Frari) is not the only one to exhibit traces of a once-rich polychromy. In this way, the life-like appearance of the doge and the proximity of the figures to painted elements such as the curtain and the lunette became manifest. For art historians collaborating with specialized photographers, the subject discussed above is a field that promises a rich yield of re-evaluations.

In the 15th century, foreigners, especially Tuscans and Lombards, competed with local stonemasons (the *tagliapietra*) for commissions. In 1415, Niccolo di Pietro Lamberti and his son Pietro di Niccolo, as well as Giovanni di Martino da Fiesole, who were all from the lower echelon of Tuscan sculptors, together with Lombard stonemasons and their now nameless colleagues, took over the partially finished crowning of the façades of St Mark's. The critical ability of artistically minded Venetians is attested to by the high quality of imported pieces such as the late 14th-century Madonna from the circle of André Beauneveu from the Netherlands (in S. Sofia), as well as sculptures from Germany and Austria (the numerous *Pietà*, and four figures with a bronze-like finish in the choir of S. Marco). In addition, Trans-Alpine woodcarvers came to Venice in the 15th century and created carved altars and countless crucifixes of high quality, which have not yet been subject to much study. On the Venetian choir stall of S. Maria dei Frari (1437) by Marco Cozzi da Vincenza, an Upper Rhenish woodcarver, perhaps from Strasbourg, executed the relief figures for the back walls. Donatello's carved St John the Baptist for the altar of Scuola dei Fiorentini (1437) in S. Maria dei Frari and Andrea del Castagno's painting of the apse of S. Zaccaria (1442) were "overlooked" by local artists, or in any case not taken as a source of inspiration. That said, Tuscan statues from Lorenzo Ghiberti's circle, which had adorned the altar of the Capella dei Mascoli in S. Marco since about 1430, were greeted with enthusiasm, as attested to by the imitations.

A seminal work of Venetian sculpture, not just for the first half of the 15th century, is the *Justitia Salomonis* by Bartolomeo Buon (attributed) at the Doge's Palace near the Porta della Carta (c.1430). Complex emotions and exact, unconventional characterizations of the protagonists by the sculptor distinguish the group.

From approximately 1460 onwards, work based on models from antiquity (*all'antiqua*) was repeatedly requested in contracts with the *tagliapietra*. And after 1469, even illuminators gave preference to a repertoire of forms that evoked antiquity. The artists determined which antiques they used and which works they chose as standards. The works of the Lombardos, especially Tullio and Antonio, and later the busts of Simone Bianco (1512–33), were prized for their similarity to works of antiquity. Nevertheless, measures of artistic quality were not solely determined by classical standards. An entirely different interpretation of the human figure is depicted in the representations of Adam and Eve by Antonio Rizzo from the Arco Foscari (about 1470, today in the palace) and by Tullio's Adam from the tomb of the Doge Andrea Vendramin (died 1474) in SS. Giovanni e Paolo (New York, The Metropolitan Museum). Rizzo depicted the body of his model along with its peculiarities; his conception came closer to that of the young Giovanni Bellini's than to that of Andrea Mantegna. Rizzo's expressive faces reflect complex emotions; Tullio, in contrast, usually formed ideally beautiful women and children whose elegiac gazes were reminiscent of models of antiquity. This conception, close to Nature and giving free rein to the emotions, also contributed to the impact of monumental burial groups as they are preserved in the Emilia and were realized by Guido Mazzoni. S. Antonio di Castello in 1489 (frag. in the Museo Civico, Padua).

Antiques, such as those Jacopo Bellini depicted in his Parisian sketchbook (Louvre), dominate works of illumination by artists such as the anonymous *Master of the Plinius of Ravenna* and the *Maestro dei Putti*. Connections to the repertoire of stonemasons who were active on the east façade of the court and in the Scala dei Giganti of the Doge's Palace are evident. Miniatures from the 1470s, like those from 1476 by Jacometto Veneziano, suggest the study of works from the sphere of Pietro Lombardo. The arabesque, knot, and floral ornamentations show similarities with the painted decoration of Gothic churches. Illuminated pages by Girolamo da Cremona (est. 1451–83) and by Benedetto Bordon (1488–1530) were the highpoint of this art. Thereafter, Venetian book illustration, which even in later times was valued in more than just official documents, lost artistic importance in the face of competition from the printing press with its printed illustrations.

Antonio Rizzo was not alone in his mastery of the extremely flat depth of field, like the simulated relief of the painted picture. In his *Vite*, 1568, Vasari described this technique as *schacciato* [compressed], and

previously, Pomponius Gauricus in his tract “De Sculptura” (about 1504) described it as *compressius*. Antonio Rizzo’s *frontale* on the altar of St Paul in S. Marco (c.1465–67), the pilaster on the Scala dei Giganti in the court of the Doge’s Palace (since 1483), and the mirrored pilaster upon its eastern façade are examples of this technique. Another relief style, likewise described by Gauricus, was chosen by the sculptor (Tullio Lombardo?) for the life of Mark reliefs on the façade of the Scuola Grande di S. Marco (soon after 1480). He layered flat and very flat figures, which he allowed to move almost identically to figures in Roman reliefs that were well known at the time. Thereby, he could be confident that an educated public would recognize these formal peculiarities as references to antique prototypes. Rather differently, Tullio’s autographed “*pala*” of the Capp. Badoer in SS. Giovanni Crisostomo (1504–06) of the Coronation of Mary with its rigid, lined-up figures shows a stylistic relationship with a relief (of the 13th century) in the Tesoro of S. Marco, partially recut about 1530. Not only Tullio’s important work but also that of other artists raises questions, the answers to which are made no easier by signatures on stylistically and qualitatively heterogeneous works.

The supremacy of painting in the standing of the arts, which had been decreed by various texts since the middle of the 16th century, had not been able to displace the sumptuously sculpted altars so prized by outstanding patrons in Venice. In chapels (early examples: Capp. Gussoni [S. Lio], Capp. Zen [S. Marco], Capp. Badoer [S. Giovanni Crisostomo], and later the Capp. del SS. Sacramento [S. Giuliano]) but also in the high altars in Andrea Palladio’s churches, S. Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore, marble, precious stones, and bronze were highly valued.

The appetite of Venetian collectors for antiquities was hardly satiable, and imitations and even forgeries, also produced by outstanding sculptors such as Tullio Lombardo and Tiziano Aspetti (post-1587), were the result. The enhancement of antiquities was among the tasks, skillfully executed, of Venice’s master sculptors—among them Tullio Lombardo, Alessandro Vittoria, and Tiziano Aspetti (1565–1607). The purification (beginning in 1923–26 and even continuing after 1945) of figures in the archaeological museum, and those from the Grimani collection, along with the impossibility of finding all the heads and limbs removed during that process, was a great misfortune both for art history and archaeology. Identifying imitations and forgeries was also difficult in the 16th century, as evidenced by the circumstances surrounding the sale of the Loredan collection to the Bavarian Duke Albrecht V that Jacopo Strada brokered in 1568.

Particularly outstanding was the collection of Cardinal Giovanni Grimani, not only for its antiquities but also for its paintings by Hieronymus Bosch and other Dutch artists. For these, the collector and connoisseur had his palace at S. Maria Formosa redecorated and, from 1537 on, embellished by Middle Italian artists. The gallery, with overhead illumination for its antiquities, the *tribuna*, was probably designed by the master of the house. Grimani's antiquities came to the Republic as a gift in 1593 and have constituted the *Statuario Pubblico* in the Procurator's Palace (the Libreria) since that time.

A shift in interest from antiquity to the Roman and Florentine works of Michelangelo began with Sansovino's work in Venice from 1526 onwards. Painters (such as Paolo Veronese in the fifties) and sculptors (such as Alessandro Vittoria) were, at certain moments in their careers, very much interested in the works of the divine Michelangelo as models for their own production. Drawings, prints, and small copies after some of Michelangelo's works were known in Venice. Tintoretto used to copy small sculptures in some of his drawings. Autograph sculptural works of Michelangelo were not present in Venice. As self-confident as he was open to the art of his newly chosen home, Sansovino also observed local traditions (as in the case of the Arsenal-Madonna 1537); he further developed Florentine and Roman styles; he shone—in his bronzes for the Loggetta and the Presbytery of San Marco—with his own inventions, some of which were also studied by Tintoretto. By about the middle of the century, he had already begun to delegate portions of his commissions for statuary to sculptors such as Danese Cattaneo (c.1509–73), Alessandro Vittoria, Tiziano Minio (1517–52), or Pietro Grazioli da Salò (d. c.1561–63). He undertook the commission for the tomb of the Doge Francesco Venier (d. 1556, S. Salvatore) together with, among others, Alessandro Vittoria.

Soon after 1550, Alessandro Vittoria developed his own personal style. As a stuccoist he was unsurpassed. Sansovino seems to have left to him the tasks such as altars, whose figures he completed personally. Vittoria was especially successful with his busts for epitaphs and tombs that combined naturalism with idealization. The evolution of his conceptions and his style are evidenced by themes like St Jerome (S. Maria dei Frari, 1565 and SS. Giovanni e Paolo, 1576) and the statues of St Sebastian. The “early Baroque” forms of his tombs and altars were studied far beyond Venice. Vittoria, too, valued co-workers who, like Andrea dall'Aquila (c.1565 to post-1608), came to his aid in comprehensive commissions. As in the case of contemporary painting, the separate areas of work on a piece did

not encourage the readiness of the co-workers to take up the style of the director of the workshop.

In the last quarter century, a rival as gifted as Vittoria arose in the person of Girolamo Campagna, who brilliantly triumphed with his high altars for Il Redentore (1589–90) and S. Giorgio (commissioned 1592) and the challenge—which was most probably his own—of installing large-scale bronze altars in Palladio's spaces without detracting from the building itself. However, his work still belongs only in the margins of this chapter.

Casa and Palazzo

The ambitious citizen (*cittadino*) and his family utilized paintings in order to communicate ideals, their education, their finesse as collectors, and, similar to the *nobili*, dynastic constructs. Until the end of the 16th century, murals formative to the townscape offered the owner of a palace not only the possibility to proclaim the antique origins of his family but also the opportunity to exhibit his artistic preferences. The genre offered painters an opportunity to rouse public attention to their art. Before 1510, Giorgione (c.1477–1510) and Titian (1488/90–1576) painted two façades for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (most recently removed frescos of Titian in the Ca' d'Oro), commissioned by the Republic. In 1531/32, Giovanni Antonio Pordenone, completely disregarding the rules which were to be published in 1537 by Serlio, created a tourist attraction with his painting of the Palace d'Anna on the Canal Grande—the owner, a Flemish merchant, was surely not displeased. At that time even modest homes were colorful and often ornamentally decorated. Today the colorless and imageless façades of the 15th and 16th centuries represent an impoverishment and a Venice in which occupants have been robbed of an important means of self-expression; since the end of the 16th century, often through wind and weather, the city has, color-wise, gradually come ever closer to the architectural ideals of the 17th and 18th centuries. Fragments of a few figural decorations have been preserved. Among a few other fragments, pieces of Tintoretto's façade paintings on the Gussoni palace have been restored.

Paintings on the walls of the palace rooms were so rare that the painting of the palace of the patriarch Giovanni Grimani at S. Maria Formosa (since 1537) can be understood as a self-confident departure from Venetian custom—a demand for attention. Furthermore, here, artists who worked in the Roman tradition were preferred (among others, Giovanni

da Udine, Francesco Salviati, and Federico Zuccari). Through the medium of art and the picture program, Giovanni Grimani wanted to send a message to Rome and weaken accusations of heresy as well. It was different with Camillo Trevisan. For the interior decoration of his palace on Murano (a lagoon island that had its own administrative authority), which also deviated from the Venetian tradition of the city palace, he chose artists residing exclusively in Venice (Paolo Veronese [1528–88], Giambattista Zelotti [c.1526–78], and Alessandro Vittoria), an avowal corresponding to his own intellectual orientation and interests. In the *terra firma* villas of the Venetians, there was a rich painting tradition. Here the building owners could choose their themes without breaching unwritten laws and conventions.

A central theme of the paintings in the city palace was the family. Apart from group portraits, of which Tintoretto's pictures of members of the Soranzo family (Milan, Castel Sforzesco) stand out artistically, there are portraits of the master of the house as well as his wife, their children, and their ancestors. Francesco Vecellio's (1475–1559/60) family portrait (Museo Correr) is only one example. Large-format portraits of patrons with their families were popular and were just as much professions of the Christian faith as records of a moment in time. Paolo Veronese's *Cuccina Family* (Dresden Staatsgalerie) and Titian's portrait of the Vendramin (London, National Gallery) are artistically superlative examples. The portraits probably adorned the central halls, on the upper floors of the palaces, which were accessible to guests. The image that painters communicated of families stands memorably and eloquently next to that portrayed in literary texts. The painted harmony and the finely graduated hierarchy of the protagonists communicated an ideal, which in the emphasis on harmony corresponded as much to the ideal of the family as to the harmonizing literary myth of the Republic.

Madonnas were found in almost every residence, which explains the large number still extant today and also explains, as a result of the high demand, their sometimes modest quality. All of them, be they painted, from stone or stucco (like large-format Madonnas from the workshop of Sansovino), served individual devotion as well as functioning to exhibit an outer display of piety.

Portraits of women in the form of a reclining Venus or of family members in mythological dress were found in more than a few 16th-century homes. The contrast between portraits and idyllically beautiful forms appears to not have been considered a problem, no different than with antique statues. A letter from Giovanni della Casa to Cardinal Alessandro

Farnese in 1554 casts a spotlight on a private level of meaning in regard to some of these *nudi*. To what extent the literary deliberations on the roles and the self-conception of the sexes were reflected in paintings remains a subject of further study.

The decoration of the home with pictures, sculptures, innumerable small bronzes that still exist today, or objects of various natures and provenances, including weapons and trophies, delighted the owners and impressed visitors. The spectrum extended from cabinets of curiosities to extensive art collections. Andrea Odoni or Gabriele Vendramin possessed now world-renowned pictures like Giorgione's *Tempest* (Gallerie dell'Accademia). It appears that collectors especially prized themes such as landscapes, pastorals, and encoded allegories and histories, the latter illustrating or alluding to authors of antiquity. The history of Venetian art collections is also the history of paintings and, only more rarely, of sculptures, which were prized above all for their artistic quality and thus also for the prominence of the artist. Even at that time, more than a few paintings were most probably incomprehensible without clarification by a well-informed master of the house; today, many paintings are to be found in romping-grounds of the highly specialized research for meaning—surely Giorgione's *Tempest* (Galleria dell'Accademia) deserves the place of honor in this regard. The thought that the paintings may have been calculated to be impossible to decipher is too modern a perspective.

Beyond the private palace, or the seat of the government or the administration, members of Venetian families could be present on altarpieces, tombs, church façades, and in pictures in the *scuole* (in the Scuole Grandi as well as the Scuole Piccole). Furthermore, the monuments on the façades of Venetian churches were not reserved for military commanders alone. In 1553, Tommaso Rangone, a scholar and patron who was as recognized as he was egocentric, had himself portrayed in bronze, sitting in his study, on the façade of S. Giuliano. Previously, Rangone's request to erect a statue with his portrait on the façade of S. Geminiano on St Mark's Square, directly across from S. Marco, had been rejected. Rangone was not the only one with demands that conflicted with Venice's conventions. Cardinal Giambattista Zen had already bequeathed an opulent endowment to the Republic, together with the stipulation that he be entombed "in" S. Marco. His burial chapel was built in the portico—which in the liturgical sense was not "in" the church yet was still at an entrance rich in tradition, the Porta da Mar—which demonstrates how such a clause could be bypassed without sacrifice to the national coffers. There had previously been a similar case with Bartolomeo Colleoni, a *condottiere* in

the service of Venice, who wanted to have an equestrian statue of himself erected on the Piazza S. Marco. Verrocchio's rider, on a pedestal designed by Alessandro Leopardi (est. 1482–1522), was finally erected in 1496 on the *campo* opposite the Scuola Grande of the city patron.

In Venice, as opposed to other centers of art, portrait busts were rather rare until the mid-16th century. They became a badge of aristocratic lineage later here than in other locations. The height of the display locations of busts on the ever-popular epitaphs, on tombs, over doors, or even crowning fireplaces was taken into consideration by the sculptors; a bust portrait at eye level was the exception.

With his altar painting the *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* of 1518 (S. Maria dei Frari), Titian made politically and thus socially significant statements about a prominent Venetian and his family. Since this watershed, at least, painters were able to satisfy, with artistic means, patrons' self-images and their heightened demands inside the churches as well. The number of altarpieces, in which the piety of the donor obtained elevated attention through his size and location in the image, increased near the end of the 16th century. Examples include S. Giuseppe di Castello (Portrait of Michele Bon in connection with a Pietà by Parrasio Micheli [before 1516–78]) and S. Maria del Giglio (Altarpiece by Tintoretto [1519–94] with a portrait of Francesco Duodo, 1592). The piety and the self-image of the portrayed, no different than in the portraits of doges or government officials, had become a theme in the altar painting.

The Scuole

The presence of the lay brotherhoods (*scuole*) of the five Scuole Grandi, but also of the more than 100 Scuole Piccole, was conspicuous in the townscape; their power to construct identity, to bolster the self-image of its members in the society, was great. Fraternities based on citizenship, profession, or devotion frequently decided upon pictorial programs in which the patron saint or a holy relic was the focal point. On the façades of the Scuole Grandi, the reliefs and statues could remind viewers of the patron or patroness (Scuola della Vergine o della Misericordia) or certain ideals (like the Caritas [from c.1440] above the portal of the Scuola Grande di S. Marco). Upon other façades the patron saint was represented as he was being revered by members of the school. Similarities to devotional images and investiture images in the Doge's Palace were hardly coincidental. Historical themes, like the one on the façade of the Scuola degli Albanesi,

where a relief immortalizes the Siege of Scutari by the Ottomans (1479), were rare.

Within the Scuole Grandi, the meeting chambers of the governing body, the Sala dell'Albergo for the *banca* and the larger chamber, the Sala Capitolare, for the members, the walls and ceilings as well as the altars on the front wall offered surfaces for pictures. Common themes were the lives of the titular saints and, after that, references to their responsibilities (Scuola di S. Girolamo), remembrance of the Holy League and the victorious battle of Lepanto against the Ottoman fleet (1571), which was a high point of Venetian history (Scuola of the Madonna del Rosario in SS. Giovanni e Paolo since 1575), and biblical and special eucharistic cycles (Scuola Grande di San Rocco). Tintoretto's emphasis on the responsibilities of the Scuola di S. Rocco, as well as the duty of every single member to supply food and drink for the needy, had weight in the face of a background of criticism about the luxurious structure and furnishings of the Scuole and the consequent neglect of duties, for example by Caravia, a goldsmith and writer whose ideas were dangerously close to Protestantism. Titian had already admonished them to give alms in his *Presentation of Mary in the Temple* in the Scuola della Carità. Tintoretto, in his Last Suppers for churches, had made the theme of the distribution of bread and wine to the needy into a theme which both warned the viewer and inspired thoughtfulness.

In the Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni Evangelista, Vittore Carpaccio (1486–1525), Gentile Bellini (1429–1507), and Lazzaro Bastiani (c.1425–1512) created, within the cycle of the relic of the Cross, urban situations as a background for miracles whose authenticity could thus be attested to. It is certain that Jacopo Bellini (c.1400–71), with his lost picture cycles of the same Scuola, was influential. The extremely detailed depictions of urban spaces and of the interiors of churches (Carpaccio: *The Vision of Ottoboni* in S. Antonio di Castello, Gallerie dell'Accademia) can be differentiated from fictitious, often not even constructible, buildings in the backgrounds of the paintings. Jacopo Bellini's scenes of courtyards, city gates, churches, and chapels betray his intense study of his Venetian and Upper Italian surroundings and at the same time his intention to transform them. Thus flourished a unique genre of architectonic picture backgrounds in which there can be seen numerous suggestions, no more, of buildings that have either been built or shown in architectural treatises (for example, by Sebastiano Serlio). This distance from reality is similar for the often magnificent floors depicted in paintings.

The intent of competing *scuole* to outdo one another with the artistic quality of their own buildings and their furnishings or with altars in churches has been attested to copiously. *Scuole* could obtain outstanding painters for the altars or give the chance to an ambitious genius such as Jacopo Tintoretto, as was the case in 1548 in the Scuola Grande di S. Marco with St Mark's Miracle (Gallerie dell'Accademia), to gain recognition for himself as an artist and for the school. In this respect, the prestige of the painter played an important role. Revolutionary artwork did not always agree with the expectations of the customer. Titian offered, in case the Scuola di S. Pietro Martire did not accept his *Martyrdom of St Peter*, to find another home for the painting (burned in 1867 and replaced with a copy by Johann Carl Loth). Thus, in their art policies, the *scuole* were often forerunners for the less-flexible aristocratic government.

The painting of the *scuole* also documents the wish of the members to be present in and remembered through pictures. In the cycle from the Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni Evangelista and the first cycle from the Scuola Grande di San Marco (presently in the Gallerie dell'Accademia), members of the *scuole* populate the scenes. The histories thus also became portraits of a self-confident social stratum. The proximity of Scuola members to the protagonist or the forefront of the picture was as likely a consequence of individual demands as artistic considerations. Whether there were fees for putting portraits into such pictures is not known. In regard to the presence of portraits, the pictures of the *scuole* are no different from those of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Doge's Palace in which depictions of prominent personages are found next to influential contemporaries and council members. In all of these pictures, people were memorialized irrespective of whether they were living or dead. Near the end of the 16th century, some themes offered a welcome pretext for group portraits. Comparable to Domenico Tintoretto's (1560–1635) portraits of the Censori in their meeting room in the Doge's Palace in which the biblical themes have been marginalized by the painter, the members of the Scuola Grande di S. Marco only leave a narrow pathway in his picture for the admiration of the miracle of the rediscovery of St Mark's Relic (Gallerie dell'Accademia). On Domenico's wings of the Altar of the Scuola dei Mercanti (Gallerie dell'Accademia), 36 neatly rowed "*confratelli*" gaze out of the picture. Today, the once-central meaning of remembrance has conveniently become fragmented.

The hierarchies within the Scuole offered the *Guardiano grande* and the artists leeway. In reliefs on the façades, the artist would stage the group

of fellow brethren, representing the *scuole*, kneeling opposite the patron saint. Restrictions like those for the doge's portrait did not exist. The marked self-confidence of someone like Tommaso Rangone was commensurate with Tintoretto's, as he portrayed Rangone as one of the protagonists dressed in robes of office in the legend of St Mark. The presumptuous message was only too well understood by Rangone's successor, who asked Tintoretto to overpaint the portraits—a task which the painter, ever ready for new commissions, would have been eager to take on. Comparable self-representations are also found in paintings in the government and administration chambers—not just in the Doge's Palace—in which influential officials were portrayed, for example, like kings at prayer. The wish to be recognized and remembered in images was another uniting element in Venetian society.

The State

Painters and sculptors obtained numerous commissions from the government and administration, as attested by the Piazza, with its buildings, but also by the administrative buildings on the Rialto. The loss of meaningful works, such as the paintings in the Doge's Palace that burned in 1574 and 1577, shifted the original emphasis. Up until the fire of 1577, paintings by Pisanello, Giovanni Bellini, Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto were assembled like a gallery of Venetian masterworks in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio. Titian's *Battle of Spoleto* (delivered in 1538) was studied by all and cited by many artists who wanted to paint battles. Outstanding artistic value stood side by side with messages that encapsulated the core statements of the written tradition. Thus, Jacopo Sansovino's bronze figures of the Logetta (begun 1541) could also be understood from varying perspectives. Memorable messages concerning the qualities of the Republic and elements of the "myth" stood alongside Sansovino's artistic agenda. Accordingly, Apollo's form should be understood as a commitment to Raphael's ideal of beauty, here to *dolcezza* (Dolce, 1557), and therefore probably also as a distancing from the dominance of Michelangelo as a standard and an orientation.

Whenever representatives of the state, as on the Logetta, chose expensive bronze as a material, they were distancing themselves from traditions that characterized the city. Istrian stone or marble were obviously considered less "precious" materials for sculptural work. Examples include the flagstaff bases in front of S. Marco from 1506 (most likely designed

by Antonio Lombardi, cast by Alessandro Leopardi), the fountains in the court of the Doge's Palace in 1556 and 1559 (by an anonymous member of the founding dynasty of the Alberghetti and Niccolo II dei Conti), and finally the project planned in 1496, the Porta della Carta of the Doge's Palace with ornate reliefs on doors of bronze. The Scuola Grande di S. Marco, in contrast, could not realize its door project, while the seated figure of Tommaso Rangone on the façade of S. Giuliano (1553) allows viewers to experience Rangone's pride and ambition. The bronze busts of the three heroes of Lepanto, created near the end of the 16th century by Tiziano Aspetti, formerly over the doors of the Sale d'Armi in the Doge's Palace, represented a special honor. Jacopo Sansovino's remodeling of the Presbytery of S. Marco with works of bronze was based on his own models. Two tribunes for singers with reliefs from the legend of St Mark, the bronze sacristy door, bronze figures on a chancel, and inlaid wood panelling of Sansovino's own design yield a simultaneously self-confident ensemble sensitively integrated into the medieval building.

Important magistrates were active in having buildings constructed or commissioning artworks. The *Provveditori alla Zecca*, the Camerlenghi (on the Rialto), and, above all, the influential procurators made important contributions to the polyphonic art policies of the Republic. The exceptional (for Venice) fountain by Danese Cattaneo in the court of the Zecca with its crowning figure of Apollo (today in the court of the Pesaro Palace), the public officials dressed as saints by Bonifacio de' Pitati, "il Veronese" (1587–53), and Tintoretto for the Palace dei Camerlenghi and the rich furnishings of the Palace of the Procurator (the Libreria) show the leeway that was also possible in artistic decisions.

In the paintings in the Doge's Palace, the Republic turned inwards as well as outwards. Already before the fire of 1577, paintings in the Hall of the Great Council reminded of the events that culminated in the Peace of Venice (1177). At that time, according to the Venetian interpretation of events, Doge Sebastiano Ziani had fought on the side of Pope Alexander III against Emperor Barbarossa and had achieved a peace accord in Venice which bestowed on the Republic not only prestige and a reputation as a third power alongside the emperor and the pope but also endowed her with "quasi royal" insignia (the *trionfi*).

After the completion of the construction work on the east wing (1553), the ceilings of the chambers of the Council of Ten were adorned with allegorical representations by Giambattista Ponchino (c.1500–c.1570), Paolo Veronese (1528–88), and Giambattista Zelotti (c.1526–78), the essential messages of which, supposedly formulated by Daniele Barbaro, were part

of the long-nurtured literary “Venice myth” and alluded to the responsibilities of the Council. The newly created chambers in the east wing offered an opportunity to modernize the decorations in respect to their content as well.

Understanding the pictures in the Chamber of the Council of Ten as well as the paintings on the vaulting of the Scala d’Oro was difficult even at that time, if it was even expected at all. The inner coherence as regards the content of the pictures by Battista Franco (c.1510–61) and the reliefs by Alessandro Vittoria on the vaulting of the staircase has still not been explained. An instigating force for the installation of the staircase could have been Sansovino’s staircase in the Palace of the Procurators, which Franco and Vittoria also decorated with allegorical themes in the same year. In order to understand both decorations, familiarity with the contents of the very popular iconographic handbooks now available, and knowledge of the core principles of the literary myth of Venice, and thus also Venetian propaganda, is a prerequisite.

The burning of the Doge’s Palace in 1574 and 1577 offered the opportunity to enrich the gutted chambers with new and more current themes. Especially important visual documents, such as the images in the Hall of the Great Council and the devotional images of the doges of the 16th century, were newly painted, which was designated as *restauro*. After 1577, the Senate commissioned intellectuals to devise an artistic agenda to be presented to the painters. The events to be depicted were briefly summarized, and page-specific bibliographic references were offered for in-depth study for the histories. For the allegories, the painters were supposed to adhere strictly to the texts. The goal of the painting of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio and of the Sala dello Scrutinio, which belonged together functionally, was to show the whole world that the Republic had been distinguished from the very beginning by the virtuous actions of its citizens and by military success. On the walls of the Great Council, the different junctures in the Venetian account of the events surrounding the Peace of Venice of 1177 are supplemented with pictures concerned with the controversial “impresa di Costantinopoli” (the 4th Crusade, 1202–04).

In the consideration of which past events would be depicted, current political considerations played a role. The Francophilia of the incumbent Doge Niccolò da Ponte was well known; to influential representatives of the Republic, an alliance with France, just as in 1202 with the Franks, appeared to offer advantages. However, the politics of the day were seldom obvious in images. Thus, the resistance against the Ottomans and the naval victory of the League, to which Venice belonged, at Lepanto

(1571) was promptly celebrated in a battle scene (burned in 1577) by Tintoretto. At the same time, the separate peace of the Republic with the Turks (1573), which was criticized by more parties than just the pope, was justified in Veronese's devotional painting (which diverges from a surviving sketch) of Doge Sebastiano Venier. His emphasis of Fides implicitly argues that the treaty was an inevitable outcome of political realism and not an abandonment of principles, as the critics of the peace agreement had charged. Jacopo Palma's (c.1548–1628) designs for the *Paradise of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio*, in which the defeat, yes, even the downfall of the Ottomans, was dealt with polemically, presumably did not come to fruition as a result of its undisguised anti-Ottoman propaganda.

Regarding the histories in the Great Council, an idea arose to have memorable paintings demonstrate the official versions of events. Paintings and accounts of lost images were valued as image documents equivalent to written documents. This practice corresponded to the demands of Counter Reformation art theorists (such as Armenini and Paleotti) for veracity in history paintings (*il vero*) and a marginal role for artistically motivated additions (*poesia*). Thus, it is all the more incomprehensible when falsifications of the tradition occur, such as in the last image of the *Impresa di Costantinopoli*, in which Andrea Vincentino (Michieli; c.1542–c.1617) depicted an event that never occurred, an event which in the Venetian state system was unthinkable: the crowning of Baldwin of Flanders as emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire by Doge Enrico Dandolo.

While the Senate allowed those forming the agenda to repeat the official version of historical events, the painters created their own conceptions and/or made inferences that often deviated from official statements and thus relativized them. This also applied to the circumstances and the course of military conflicts. Tintoretto stressed the physical strength of Herculean and faceless soldiers. Francesco Bassano (1549–92) emphasized the pain and suffering of the people on campaigns, while Veronese avoided the confrontation of soldiers and recorded moments before or after the battle in a landscape with stands of trees, and in this way opened an unexpected approach to military conflict. At the same time, every painter displayed his personal art as connoisseurs had come to expect it, consisting of his special, recognizable view of people and things.

The painters deviated from many of those stipulations thought to be obligatory. The "picture" that the authors of the agenda had formulated corresponded only in part to the picture that the painters considered suitable. These departures had as much a formal as a content-based dimension, as in the case of the three allegories on the ceiling of the Sala del

Maggior Consiglio (the “outcomes of the armed conflicts”). Veronese’s insertion of the French king Henry III as the embodiment of honor in his *Pax Veneta* gave a current political accent to the painting. In his painting of the voluntary surrender of cities to the Republic of Venice, Tintoretto gave St Mark’s lion and the doge roles almost straight from panegyric texts. Tintoretto dealt with the material similarly in his *restauro* of the burned devotional painting of Doge Andrea Gritti (1523–38) by Titian for the Sala del Collegio. There, by artistic means and by the modification of a woodcut version of the painting, he emphasized the personal achievements of the doge as military leader and the honor that was due to him and his family. Paintings convey the views of the painter regarding central themes of the myth, but also the role of the protagonist, especially the doge. The history of art does not confuse this “visual myth” with the literary myth. What the “visual exegesis” in paintings by Jacopo Bassano has achieved opens up manifold perspectives for viewing political, propagandistic images.

There were also darker moments in the history of the Republic. Among them belongs the Siege of Chioggia by the Genoese, which Venetians withstood in 1380 under the dogeship of Andrea Contarini. The importance given to this threat is depicted by Veronese’s painting of the homecoming of the doge to Venice, now opposite the Doge’s Throne. The treatment of the military surrender of Agnadello, which those confederated in the League of Cambrai brought down upon the Republic, is especially enlightening. The tomb of Doge Leonardo Loredan (1501–21), who was in office in 1509, was begun soon after 1560 by Danese Cattaneo and Girolamo Campagna; it was completed in SS. Giovanni e Paolo between 1604 and 1616 and reminds the viewer of the united enemies as well as of the reconquest of Padua in the same year as the surrender. In Jacopo Palma’s painting in the Senate, Venetia unleashes the lion of St Mark on her European attackers, a confrontation which the doge accompanies with outstretched arms. Not upon him, but rather upon the lion is bestowed the wreath of triumph by the goddess Victoria. This last successfully survived battle against a militarily superior force, and the resurrection of the Republic after an apparently definitive surrender, increased the myth of Venice’s invincibility.

In paintings in the Doge’s Palace one is reminded of the outstanding moments of the republican history, of the deeds of individuals, and finally of the qualities and claims of the Republic. On the ceiling of the Sala del Collegio, Veronese painted Justitia and Pax as *custodes libertatis* as they present their attributes to a Venetia enthroned on the globe. Depicted in a second painting is an Old Testament sacrifice (*religio numquam derelicta*)

with Fides, the Christian faith, appearing in the smoke that is ascending to heaven. Inscriptions on a sketch by Veronese contain a reference to the theological concept of justification, a Protestant confession that was rejected. Upon a third were the inseparable Mars and Neptune (*robur imperii*). Previously (between 1554 and 1566), Jacopo Sansovino had supervised the completion of the colossal statues of Mars and Neptune, the Giganti for the eponymous staircase in the court of the Doge's Palace. The Virtues and virtuous heroes of antiquity complete the program.

The right of the Republic to cities and lands acquired with or without military power was frequently questioned, and once acquired, sovereignty was always defended by force of arms. Lions of St Mark (as *leone andante*) such as the one by Vittore Carpaccio, standing with their paws simultaneously upon dry land (the *terra firma*) and in the waters of the lagoon, became eloquent symbols. The allegedly voluntary submission to superior Venetian rule (the *libertà veneziana*) and the subjugation by military means are central themes in the Palace of the Doge. The tradition that the Republic ruled the sea by right of the bestowal of the ring (1177) by Pope Alexander III coexisted with an insistence upon the original right to rule. The paintings recall the supposedly voluntary submission (as in the central panel on the ceiling of the *Maggior Consiglio*) as well as—and this more frequently—the military conflicts. Tintoretto depicted dominion over the sea in the central picture of the ceiling of the Sala del Senato. Venetia is enthroned in the midst of the gods of antiquity high above the sea out of which the inhabitants bring her gifts. Paolo Sarpi convincingly argued that it was not wise to justify a claim to rulership with dubious archival testimony.

The succession of the doges, uninterrupted since the early 9th century, was documented *ad oculos* by means of successive portraits in the friezes beneath the ceilings of the Sala dello Scrutinio and the Great Council. The series of devotional images of the doges divided up between various chambers probably began with Giovanni Mocenigo (1478–85) (London, National Gallery). Giovanni Bellini's painting of the doges Marco and Agostino Barbarigo (1486–1501) kneeling before the Madonna (Murano, S. Pietro Martire) appears to have originated from the Sala dello Scudo. For public portraits of doges, kneeling was stipulated by the election capitulation (the *promissione ducale*). At the same time, liberties were taken by the painters within the parameters of this type of picture. Titian's *Fede* depicts the kneeling doge, Antonio Grimani (doge from 1521–23), in rapture before the cross while the city's patron turns around as if he has been suddenly surprised by the heavenly vision. When one recalls the

banishment of Grimani for his evasion of a naval battle with the Ottomans near Zonchio in 1499, this devotional picture also becomes one of rehabilitation. Similar motives also appear to be behind the commission for a façade monument for Vincenzo Pisani (1542) on the western face of S. Maria Formosa.

Tintoretto made the doges central to his devotional images. Their kneeling with outstretched arms could be simultaneously interpreted as the prayer gesture of kings and as a pose of humility. In the devotional image of Niccolò da Ponte (1578–85) in the Collegio, the painter alluded to the doge's name by means of a bridge (*ponte*) high above the city, an allusion previously made by a speaker following the doge's election. However, this is not the only instance in which panegyric texts aid in an understanding of the paintings. In his paintings, Tintoretto gave secondary importance to devotion and thus also to the tradition of the votive painting in favor of the expectations for a state portrait, of the *primus inter pares* with its demand for quasi royal dignity (*dignità*). In his double portrait of the doges Pietro Lando (1539–45) and Marcantonio Trevisan (1553–54) above the bench (the *tribunale*) of the *Serenissima Signoria* in the Sala del Senato, the kneeling doges, turned completely toward the viewer, do not even notice the stirring appearance of the dead Christ. Here too, in this only seemingly stereotypical and certainly non-homogeneous genre, the manifold messages are in need of deciphering.

Sacred Spaces

When studying the interior decorations of churches and cloisters, the outfitting of functional spaces such as the sacristy, chapter houses, and refectories, or the design of bells, organ wings, or stained-glass windows is too seldom noticed. Of all the chapels with specific functions, only the Chapels of the Blessed Sacrament have been researched.

Altars were a central task for painters, sculptors, woodcarvers, and architects (often described as *tagliapietra*). The circumstances and special qualities of every commission leave traces in the work. Tasks were divided according to the responsibilities of the respective guilds (*arti*). Divergent conceptions of the painter, sculptor, carver, and architect, even as to a suitable style, could lead to tension-filled works. The evident wish of the painter since the middle of the Quattrocento to create a unified image space in which saints are collected around a Madonna (*sacra conversazione*) was complicated in the second half of the Quattrocento by the more

popular polyptych settings. Giovanni Bellini solved the problem with his painting in the Pesaro Chapel in S. Maria dei Frari by fabricating a unified space behind the setting. Images with antique motifs could be integrated in a late gothic setting as in Bartolomeo Vivarini's St Mark's Altar in S. Maria dei Frari (1474).

While multipartite altars (the polyptych) were becoming outdated, painted and hewn stone tablets (the *pale*) became common. Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna with Saints* for S. Giobbe (c.1470; burned in 1867) and Antonello da Messina's *Madonna with Saints* for S. Cassiano (c.1470) (fragments in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien) had a groundbreaking and exemplary affect. However, the gathering of saints around the Madonna (*sacra conversazione*), in which, as in Giovanni Bellini's altarpiece in S. Zaccaria, the saints are present together in the same space but at the same time each alone in their own respective space, became a common model.

Altarpieces with saints in a realistic-looking chapel, often with a mosaic apse, were popular. Apse mosaics were found at the beginning of the 16th century in the medieval S. Marco and in S. Salvatore. The seminal work of Venetian Renaissance mosaic is the vault of the sacristy of San Marco (after 1493–c.1530).

Painters such as Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano (1459/60–1517/18) refrained from taking up the details and sometimes the colors of the sculptured frames in order to create a seamless continuation of the architecture of the picture into the painting and thus create a *trompe l'oeil*. The location of the saints was supposed to be invitingly near, yet not comfortably approachable.

Titian's works did not become the only measure for aesthetic quality after Giorgione's death (1510). Albrecht Dürer's rosary painting for the Chapel of the German Merchants in San Bartolomeo (in 1506; Prague, National Gallery) was also a response to the images of the aged Giovanni Bellini whom he so admired. Titian's *Assunta* on the high altar of S. Maria dei Frari with its larger-than-life, passionately emotional apostles (1518) was greeted with incomprehension by the Franciscan brothers. The painting, with its monumental figures, and the expectations shaped by tradition seemed to be incompatible. Titian's *Pesaro-Madonna* (S. Maria dei Frari, 1519–26) brought a further break with tradition. Titian shifted the Madonna from the central axis of the painting and enthroned her in front of two eccentrically arranged giant pillars. She became a counterpart to the patron Jacopo Pesaro, who is kneeling in the left side of the painting, accompanied by his family. The coat of arms of the Borgia pope on

the flag indicates that Pesaro stood on the papal side as a commander; the prominent position of St Peter must have unsettled Venetian patriots. Titian's composition and the significant presence of the patron became exemplary for many patrons and artists.

In the second decade, other painters also gave up the conventions of the *sacra conversazione*. On the high altarpiece for S. Giovanni Crisostomo (1510–11), Sebastiano del Piombo (c.1485/86–1547) painted the seated saint turned to the side in front of a massive structure and pillar. Giovanni Bellini “answered” with his *Diletti Altar* in the same church (1513) by placing the saints in the center, meditating high on a cliff in the landscape. With Titian's *Martyrdom of St Peter* for the altar of the Scuola by the same name in SS. Giovanni e Paolo (about 1528–30), large-scale, dramatically acting figures from a saint's legend became the protagonists of an altarpiece. With that, in Venice, the future belonged to narrative altarpieces (the “history paintings”). It is probable that many congregation members and some patrons paid less attention to the artistic quality of the paintings and more to a comparison with the material and the wealth of neighboring altars, the position of the altar in the church, or the presence of contemporaries in the picture.

Ceiling painting was a task of growing importance. Ornamental decoration of the surfaces around fabricated openings in the blue sky (S. Samuele choir) was prized in the late 15th century. In 1559, Cristoforo and Stefano Rosa of Brescia fabricated a space surrounded by pillars and empty of figures on the ceiling of the anteroom of the library of the Procurator's palace and placed Titian's *Wisdom* in the central field. While Paolo Veronese, Giambattista Zelotti, and Giambattista Ponchino depicted their figures from a low-angle view, moving in the blue sky above the viewer, specialists of *quadratura* painting fabricated inhabited or uninhabited spaces that could open up to the heavens. The Rosa brothers' painting of the flat ceiling and the walls of the nave in the Madonna dell'Orto (1556; destroyed 1864) was a spectacular masterwork of the *Quadraturisti*. The extension of the painting space beyond flat ceilings and on vaults remained a task for painters and art writers (Cristoforo Sorte, 1580, and Giuseppe Viola Zanini, 1629). Flat ceilings of wood or stucco, in the fields or settings of which canvas paintings were installed, were customary in the 16th century. Looking at such works as illustrations in books or on a computer monitor distorts the view of these ceiling paintings. Only on location, within the spatial context, and viewed from below at an angle, does the task of the painter become clear and comprehensible: the design of a composition in which

the messages contained therein include the viewers themselves, who are gazing upward.

A comparably eccentric observer's viewpoint is required by most of the horizontal format paintings that adorn or once adorned the sidewalls of the chapels or of the choir as *quadri laterali*. As one example among many, Tintoretto convincingly composed his *Washing of the Feet* (Madrid, Prado) for S. Marcuola from the point of view of an observer near the choir gate in respect to the course of the narrative and the weighting of the protagonists. When viewed head-on, this painting and its narrative fall apart into disconnected pieces. The same goes for Tintoretto's *Last Supper* in the choir of S. Giorgio Maggiore or Veronese's pictures from the life of the titular saint in the choir of San Sebastiano. From this close connection with their respective locations, complications result regarding the hanging of such works in museums as well as in respect to their interpretation.

Wherever an opportunity for a portrait presented itself, the Venetians were ready to take advantage of it. They dressed themselves in foreign robes both frequently and eagerly. In a painted portrait, it is difficult to differentiate and find the balance between the expectations of the customer and the artistic methods of the painters. Thereby, the choice of an established type of portrait (kneeling piece, seated on a chair, simply standing with or without significant objects or companions, frontal or in profile, with or without movement, in front of a neutral ground or in an interior space) could readily impart something of the self image of the portrayed and/or those whom the portrait was addressing. However, these portraits say relatively little about the artistic achievement of the painter. Citing these, however, remains a central object of art history.

Around the middle of the 16th century in Venice, a specifically Venetian theory of painting was formulated as a reaction to debates going on in central Italy. In contrast to *disegno* (i.e., the definition of form through line), which had been decreed essential for the quality of art in central Italy, in Venice one saw, in *colore* and *colorito*, the definition of form through color as essential. That Vasari had undertaken a conceptual expansion of *disegno* as *concetto* and *idea* indicates that there was a desire to overcome merely formal criteria in this debate. Thus, the combination of *disegno* and *colorito* in Venice was considered an outstanding achievement.

Art literature of the Counter-Reformation reflects on the sacral historical painting as well as on the profane "historical event painting" (each of which were referred to generally as "histories" in the 16th century) and

on the commitment of the painter to reproduce the literary tradition, or the *historia* according to the respective texts. At the same time, painters were entitled to use their imaginations in the more peripheral parts of the work, as was antithetically formulated, to utilize the artistic liberties of *poesie*. This allowed the use of pictures as documents of equal value to literary texts and archival evidence, especially in the case of controversial evaluations of the course of historical or imaginary events. Paolo Veronese, who was well versed in questions of art theory, exploited these deliberations before the Tribunal of the Inquisition, calling the criticized elements in his Last Supper (Galleria dell'Accademia) *ornamento* and thus releasing it from any connection to the text of biblical tradition and its exegesis. The renaming of his painting to *The Feast in the House of Levi* also testified to the possibility of selecting a similar pictorial construction for different themes.

This construct, built with opposing forces and further differentiated by its authors in intermediate steps (in this way a *genere misto* came into being), is helpful in understanding some paintings; however, it cannot explain those religious paintings which diverge from the compositional conventions—for example, those of Tintoretto. Tintoretto postulated his truths and opened the view to previously unseen dimensions of theological tradition, be it texts or images. This is true for many of his paintings in the Sala dell'Albergo of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco or his *Crucifixion* in S. Cassiano. So, Tintoretto was not utilizing “manneristic” compositional techniques and thus adapting to fashionable influences during a limited period of time; far more, his pictures are unique depictions marked by the contemporary retellings of biblical stories with their very rich imagery. Among such stories are those by Pietro Aretino and the transcriptions of medieval texts (the popular *volgarizzamenti*) reset in Venice, such as the *Vita Jesu Christi* by Ludolf of Saxony (1570). That Tintoretto, and likewise Titian for a few years, believed he had to react to the attention received by the provocative formal innovations of the likes of a Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone by attempting to surpass his annoying competitors with their own weapons—above all Herculean figures and mighty horses—belongs to the chapter in Sartre's *Le sequestré de Venise* devoted to Tintoretto and his unceasing competitiveness.

Paintings and sculptures by artists who, though rarely born in the metropolis, resided there were particularly sought after in the Venetian realm (and not exclusively on the *terra firma*). This was especially true of altars that could be painted or sculpted in Venice and then shipped without too great of an expenditure. Giovanni Bellini's altar for S. Francesco in Pesaro (Museo

Civico, Musei del Vaticano) and an altar with figures by Pietro Lombardo for the Colleoni Chapel in Bergamo are prominent examples.

Titian, the only painter who continuously worked and wanted to work far beyond Venice, repeatedly received commissions from the mighty, such as from the emperors Charles V and Philipp II, Pope Paul III, Francesco Maria della Rovere (Urbino), the Gonzaga (Mantua), and Alfonso d'Este (Ferrara). His fame soon also increased the reputation of his chosen home as an art metropolis. Tintoretto's Gonzaga cycle, in which the painter was prepared to accept some interference from Mantua, was in comparison but a flash in the pan. At the same time, Titian frequently tackled tasks that he did not encounter in the metropolis due to the particular social and political order. The equestrian statue of a ruler (Charles V; Madrid, Prado) and the full-figure portrait of outstanding personalities (Philipp II; Madrid, Prado) fall under this category. Thereby, the genre of the full-figure portrait shows that on *terra firma* outside of the metropolis, the conventions were more relaxed. Veronese's portraits of men and women, such as those of Vicentine society, testify to this. Thus, with his growing success, Titian could afford to limit himself to the commissions in Venice that seemed most important and leave other potential commissions to his omnipresent rivals, such as Jacopo Tintoretto.

A research field that has not been tilled well enough is the painters' workshops in which the directors were able to have a great number of paintings executed in their name. The imitation of the painting style and the painting technique of the workshop director by the assistants, among them members of the family and experienced imitators, was tolerated by customers with few exceptions. Thus, extensive commissions which the director of the workshop did not personally wish to fulfill could be realized in a reasonable amount of time. The approximation of a personal style and the formulation of a simplified—and thereby more easily imitated, "reduced"—style facilitated the collective execution of large canvases for more than just the Doge's Palace or the *scuole*. The mastery of a recognized style also meant that the financial success of a workshop was maintained well beyond the death of the director. The inheritance and continued use of designs also contributed. Such collaboration was prevalent in the works of Tintoretto and Veronese, even if differences arise today concerning the extent of the respective artists' or assistants' participation. It is similar for the sculptures coming out of the workshop of Jacopo Sansovino after the mid-16th century. The personal execution was thus a special distinction for the customer. A special case is Titian's late style, which was and is for many, even in his time, strange and incomprehensible.

The collaboration of assistants, as in the majority of paintings in the Doge's Palace and also in those of the *scuole*, does not automatically make these paintings "internship works" or "workshop productions." Thus the question arises as to whether the design of the workshop director, for example of Tintoretto, is to be seen behind the execution of assistants, who remain anonymous, and whether the interpretation of the presented theme reflects a dimension of the director's own work. Thus, Domenico Tintoretto's images, which are often banal in content, differentiate themselves from those of his father in more than just the manner of painting and composition. The mosaics that Bonifacio de' Pitati, Giuseppe Porta (c.1520–c.1575), Jacopo Tintoretto, and Titian designed for S. Marco demand a differentiated evaluation of the design which they are based on and of its implementation by mosaicists. Therefore, with regard to the mosaics of San Marco, one must not forget the stipulations (1566 and 1610) that in renewing the mosaics the old (documents) were to be copied (transcribed) and the original expression should be preserved in stylistically new attire.

The recognizability of popular styles (of the manner of painting as well as the interpretation and selection of themes) brought not only success to the workshop of Bassano, until well into the 17th century, but also the interchangeability of the products. Even if, and perhaps even because, someone like Francesco Bassano (1549–92) had earned himself a reputation, above all among collectors, as a painter of animals and "simple people," Jacopo Tintoretto in his *historie* repeatedly painted animals and objects, thus indicating that he had mastered the specialty of his rival.

Since the downfall of the Republic (1797), countless artworks whose home was in Venice were destroyed, sold, stolen, dumped, or displaced. Important works are to be found in museums and collections throughout the world, and there these have also become an important part of the respective culture.

A Note on Sources

This is a selection of more recent publications that can ease the way to older, but not less important, research. (Due to lack of space, monographs or investigations dedicated to single questions or themes are not cited.) These can be found in handbooks, art lexicons, and electronic catalogues (such as OPAC of the *Kunstbibliotheken Fachverbund Florenz-Munich-Rom*).

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VENETIAN ART, 1600–1797

Massimo Favilla, Ruggero Rugolo, and Dulcia Meijers*

Part One: The 17th Century

On 21 August 1609, Galileo Galilei gave a demonstration of his recently perfected telescope to Doge Leonardo Donà and the senators of the Venetian Republic from a room atop the bell-tower of St. Mark's. By means of this extraordinary instrument, places and things once invisible to the naked eye suddenly came within view: in this case, even the domes of the basilica of Santa Giustina in Padua.¹ Venice thus witnessed the beginning of a new vision of the world, which in the realm of painting helped bring about the infinite and vertiginous perspectives displayed on the baroque walls and ceilings of all of Europe.

Three years earlier, in 1606, the Roman curia had excommunicated the Republic of San Marco for the state's stalwart defense of its own jurisdiction (the Interdict crisis). In the face of unacceptable interference from Rome, the *Dominante* reacted with obstinate opposition and held its ground throughout the trying episode. The passing of the century brought still other critical moments: the devastating plague of 1630, followed by the disastrous war of Candia (1645–69), in which Venice finally lost the homonymous island (Crete in Italian) to the Ottoman Empire, the high point in 1687 of Venice's long-awaited first victories over the Ottomans led by the future Doge Francesco Morosini "*il Peloponnesiaco*," and the appropriately solemn consecration of the monumental Basilica della Salute in 1631 (in the wake of the plague) designed by Baldassare Longhena. This

* In this chapter on Venetian art a subdivision has been made, with the part on the 17th century being written by Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo and that on the 18th century by Dulcia Meijers. The somewhat divergent approaches can in part be attributed to the differences in historiographical traditions and type of scholarship pertaining to each century. Whereas study of Venetian 17th-century art is of relatively recent date and as of now largely concerned with cataloguing and classifying, scholarly interest in Venetian art of the 18th century can boast of a longstanding critical and international research that also embarked on studies of cultural historical nature. Within the context of this volume, the authors have preferred to focus primarily on the artworks that have been produced for the main island of Venice.

¹ *Il cannocchiale di Galileo: Venezia 1609–2009* (Venice, 2009) [Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti].

turbulent cycle only came to an end with the Peace of Passarowitz in 1718, which ended the last of the *Serenissima's* wars against the Ottomans and confirmed the loss of the Morea and Venice's last imperial ambitions in the eastern Mediterranean.

This was a period of profound social transformations in a context traditionally hostile to just this sort of changes; but the state's financial crises forced the Venetian patriciate to open its tightly sealed *Libro d'oro* and accept new members in return for badly needed funds. Thus, "new" families found their place in the city's aristocracy, despite the irritation of the older noble clans.

From Padovanino to Tiberio Tinelli

The beginning of 17th century in Venetian painting witnessed the slow but inexorable decline of a longstanding tradition incarnated in the late *tizianismo* of Jacopo Negretti, known as Palma il Giovane (Venice, 1524–28). At the same time, Alessandro Varotari or il Padovanino (Padua, 1588–Venice, 1649), after a period in Rome from 1616–19, was attempting to give life to "a painting style of clear and crystalline atmosphere"² that, while looking back to the young Titian, was filtered through the interpretation the Caracci and their followers had given to 16th-century Venetian painting. The *Orpheus and Eurydice* in the Gallerie dell'Accademia exemplifies this style, which would find its most genuine and effective expression in Padovanino's pupil, Girolamo Forabosco (Venice, 1605–Padua, 1679). The synthesis between Titian's enduring influence and new Baroque sensibilities emerges in Forabosco's masterpiece, the *Miraculous Rescue of a Gondola*, in the parish church of Malamocco in 1646, a votive painting which presents the occasion for the realization of a group portrait sketched in soft, fluid colors.

Another of Padovanino's pupils was Tiberio Tinelli (Venice, 1586–1638), "a most valiant and capricious painter" who "worked marvelously in portraits."³ He was noted for his ability to restore life and breath to his subjects, and his refined and erudite approach; his early work echoes a studied *giorgionismo* veiled with melancholy, and a masterly *disegno* mitigated by a soft brushstroke and warm colors come together in the elegant *Ludovico Widmann* (1638) in the National Gallery of Art in Washington,

² Lorenzo Finocchi Gheri, *I quattro secoli della pittura veneziana* (Venice, 2003), p. 93.

³ Carlo Ridolfi, *Le Maraviglie dell'Arte, ovvero le Vite de gl'Illustri Pittori Veneti e dello Stato*, ed. D. von Hadeln, 2 vols (1648; Berlin, 1914–24), 278.

D.C.⁴ We are presented with a modern psychological portrait that will be an example to both Sebastiano Bombelli (Udine, 1635–Venice, 1719) and Nicolò Cassana (Venice, 1659–London, 1714), the principal exponents of Venetian portraiture in the second half of the 17th century.

In the first 30 years of the century, sculpture too tended to follow the late Mannerist production of Alessandro Vittoria and Girolamo Campagna, repropounding a consolidated visual language that was more than suitable for Counter-Reformation devotion. Only with the arrival in the *lagune* of Clemente Moli (Bologna, c. 1600–Venice, 1664) and Mattia Carneri (Trent, 1592–1673) at the beginning of the 1630s would there be the beginning of a change that would be gradually consolidated due to later contributions of northern European sculptors such as Melchiorre Barthel (Dresden, 1625–72), Giusto Le Court (Ypres, 1627–Venice, 1679), Enrico Meyring (Reyne, 1639–Venice, 1723), and Michiel Fabris or l'Ongaro (Bratislava, 1644–Venice, 1684).⁵

The Contribution of Foreign Artists: The Foresti

In such a context, Venice confirmed its vocation as a city both cosmopolitan and hospitable to *foresti* (foreigners), in the period when local artists were forced to measure themselves against the so-called “golden century” of 16th-century painting, an unavoidable object of comparison and unreachable archetype. It was partly thanks to the contribution of foreign artists that 17th-century Venetian painting was able to come to grips with its illustrious past. These influences from abroad were more important than ever in this conjuncture in determining the development of the Venetian tradition, which at the same time was shifting its gaze to Rome and Bologna as well.⁶

If Carlo Saraceni (Venice, c. 1579–1620) returned to his native land in 1619 after a long period in Rome with a pictorial style likened to a “softened Caravaggio,”⁷ the Roman Domenico Fetti (Rome, 1589–Venice, 1623) reached Venice via Mantua the following year, reinterpreting classic Venetian coloring in an eminently personal manner, with broad brushstrokes filled with light “alla Rubens.”

⁴ Francesca Bottacin, *Tiberio Tinelli* (Monfalcone, 2004), pp. 124–25.

⁵ Paola Rossi, “Il ruolo della scultura nel Seicento e la sua interrelazione con la pittura,” in Mauro Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Seicento*, 2 vols (Milan, 2000–01), 2:617–24.

⁶ Mauro Lucco, “Foresti a Venezia nel Seicento,” in Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto*, 2:485–522.

⁷ Finocchi Ghersi, *I quattro secoli*, p. 94.

The *Saint Jerome inspired by the Angel* in the church of San Nicola da Tolentino, painted around 1627 by the German Johann Liss (Oldenburg, c.1597–Verona, 1631) stands out as the manifesto of Venetian Baroque painting (Fig. 22.1). Here, colors and light are wonderfully fused together through the application of pictorial liquid matter, transparent and sparkling, such that it must have amazed contemporaries and certainly the eventual protagonists of the 18th-century *Barocchetto* as well. These results were the fruit of the intense meditation of the artist, a brilliant synthesis of his northern formative influences, the experience of Caravaggio and his imitators in Rome, and the *colorismo* of the Venetian tradition.

Also known as the Prete Genovese for his place of origin and his Capuchin habit, Bernardo Strozzi (Genova, 1581–Venice, 1644) arrived in the lagoon two years after Liss's death. With a formation quite similar to that of the German painter—though with different results via the influence of Lombard naturalism—Strozzi would play an important role in the renovation of Venetian pictorial language that had begun in the late 1630s. Employed mainly as a portrait artist, he too, along with other *rinovatori* such as Nicolas Régnier (Maubege, 1591–Venice, 1667), Girolamo Forabosco and Camillo Procaccini (Bologna, c. 1660–Milan 1721), would leave an emblematic testament to the new style in the church of the Tolentini with his *St. Lawrence distributing religious ornaments to the poor*.⁸

The Tenebrosi

From 1631, with the opening of the competition for the votive temple of Santa Maria della Salute, Venice came back to life in a fervor of both private and public construction projects which contributed to a complete redefinition of the urban scene. Nor did there lack a certain taste for the monstrous behind the solemnity of this building program: the deformities of the sculptures on the façade of the church of San Moisè by Enrico Merengo, and those of the Pesaro monument at the Frari by Giusto Le Court, Melchiorre Barthel, Francesco Cavrioli, and Michele Fabris reach their climax in the dazed and muddled allegory of the wooden rises by Francesco Pianta in the Scuola di San Rocco (Fig. 22.2).

The transformation of Venetian painting in the first half of the century proceeded slowly, but inexorably; instead of choosing a particular path, it tended to welcome in the most varying contributions. Of the many

⁸ Filippo Pedrocchio, "Venezia," in Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto*, 1:44.



Figure 22.1. Johann Liss, *The Vision of St. Jerome*, circa 1627. Venice, Church of San Nicolò da Tolentino. (Foto Luca Sassi, Schio-Vicenza).



Figure 22.2. Francesco Pianta, *Cicero Defending Sculpture*, circa 1657. Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco. (Foto Luca Sassi, Schio-Vicenza).

tumultuous events of the 17th century, the terrible plague that struck Venice in 1630 offers a dividing line between two eras. In the following period rife with political and social change, another *foresto*, Giovanni Battista Langetti (Genoa, c. 1635–Venice 1676), arrived in Venice around 1655⁹ and introduced the Caravaggesque culture whose overwhelming force would give life to the so-called *tenebroso* (the dark and mysterious ones).¹⁰ This was a style connoted by a dramatic realism very different from a Venetian sensibility that had retained more affinities with early 16th-century tastes; a style more in line with the climate of uncertainty and anxiety generated by the vicissitudes of the war of Candia. In his altarpiece of the *Crucified Christ and Mary Magdalene* of 1663, first in the church of the Terese and now at Ca' Rezzonico, Langetti shows off a vibrant play of *chiaroscuro*, where the body nailed to the cross with arms nearly parallel betrays a neo-medieval inspiration.¹¹ The same period witnessed the works of Pietro Vecchia (Vicenza? 1603–Venice 1678),¹² an eccentric artist with a predilection for the grotesque and a penchant for bizarre and even frightening physiognomies. His *Francesco Borgia attending the exhumation of the cadaver of the Empress Isabella*, executed between the seventh and eighth decades of the century, originally for the Jesuit convent in Venice, represents a theatrical and horrifying *memento mori*.¹³ The touching *Deposition* the Neapolitan Luca Giordano painted around 1665 in Santa Maria del Pianto, now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, presents a scene whose characters place themselves to the sides, leaving, in a violent and disorderly centrifugal movement, a dark and ominous void in the center.¹⁴ Such a scene bears little in common with the works of the same artist in the Salute, painted only a few years later and portraying a neo-Titianesque Marian celebration.

From the middle of the 17th century, Venice also became the undisputed European capital of dramatic theater with musical accompaniment. The success of the genre had strong reverberations throughout the art

⁹ Marina Stefani Mantovanelli, "Giovanni Battista Langetti," *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 17 (1990), 41–105.

¹⁰ Pedrocco, "Venezia," pp. 57–73; Bernard Aikema, "Il secolo dei contrasti: le tenebre," in Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto*, 2:543–72, 543–72.

¹¹ Stefania Mason, "L'immaginario della morte e della peste nella pittura del Seicento," in Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto, Il Seicento*, 2:523–42, 536.

¹² Bernard Aikema, "Pietro della Vecchia, a Profile," *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 14 (1984), 77–100.

¹³ Mason, "L'immaginario della morte," p. 521.

¹⁴ Pedrocco, "Venezia," p. 60.

world as well. The transposition of ephemeral set designs through *trompe-l'oeil* from the stage to the longer-lasting wall surfaces of churches, palaces, and villas was a symptom of the will of the ruling class to amaze and to instruct, a motto that effectively encapsulates the spirit of all Baroque art. Suddenly, as if in a witty trick of mirrors, illusion becomes a metaphor for reality. A reality often harsh and brutal was thus exorcized and sublimated through the pictorial narration of *pathétiques* or triumphal sacred and mythological histories, of idealized visions of domestic life, and of enchanted Arcadian tales which sometimes provided the visual background for lively literary academies.

Even Antonio Zanchi (Este, 1631–Venice 1722) leader of the *tenebroso* and an artist of severe taste, could not remain completely immune from the passion for the ephemeral that characterized his period. Having arrived in Venice at the age of 20, Zanchi found his true teacher in the Roman (but Venetian by adoption) Francesco Ruschi, after a brief apprenticeship with the Brescian Giacomo Pedrali. In 1657, at the beginning of his career, Zanchi created the sets for the musical drama *Le fortune di Rodope e Damira* put on at the Venetian theater of Sant'Aponal,¹⁵ and at the same time he began the composition of a treatise on the art of sculpture and painting, now lost. Purity of design, warm tones, breadth of composition, and counterpoints which add to the unity of the whole are the elements distinguishing Zanchi's artistic production.¹⁶ His masterpiece dates to 1666, consisting in the two large canvases portraying *The Plague in Venice* on the right-hand wall of the main staircase in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, characterized by a strong stage-like effect and a profound dramatic tension. The painter displays another theatrical artifice through the creation of two different spaces separated by a column, but with a unitary perspective: a "great theater" that allows him to stage as dramatic an event as the pestilence of 1630.¹⁷ Critics from Marco Boschini forward have considered this work to be Zanchi's greatest endeavor.¹⁸

¹⁵ Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo, "Un tenebroso all'opera. Appunti su Antonio Zanchi," *Venezia Arti* 17/18 (2003–04, 2006), 63.

¹⁶ Pietro Zampetti, *Antonio Zanchi*, in *I pittori Bergamaschi dal XIII al XIX secolo, Il Seicento*, vol. 4 (Bergamo, 1987), pp. 389–707.

¹⁷ Lionello Puppi and Ruggero Rugolo, "'Un'ordinaria forma non alletta.' Arte, riflessione sull'arte e società," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 7 (1997): *La Venezia barocca*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, pp. 635–36.

¹⁸ Marco Boschini, *La ricche minere della pittura veneziana* (Venice, 1674), p. 51.

The next and decisive moment of the story is visible in the works on the left-hand wall of the staircase: mirror images of their *pendant*, placed *in situ* in 1673, and the work of Pietro Negri (Venice, 1628–79), an artist who had had an artistic formation identical to that of Antonio Zanchi.

A painter with Bavarian origins who came to Venice in 1655, Johann Carl Loth (Munich, 1632–Venice 1698) also figured among the exponents of the *tenebrosi*, coming by the 1680s to modify a Caravaggesque naturalism with more academic sensibilities. Through a less-marked *disegno*, a more diluted use of color, and an airy quality of composition, Loth created languid atmospheres, at times verging on *pathétiques*, almost in the style of Pietro da Cortona. Testament to this *virage* is his altarpiece in the church of San Silvestro, the *Holy Family* of 1681.¹⁹

Giovanni Coli (Lucca, 1636–81) and Filippo Gherardi (Lucca, 1636–81), two *lucchese* painters active in Rome, brought to Venice in 1663–64 the lessons learned from Pietro da Cortona, along with an homage to Veronese, in their paintings for the ceiling of the library of San Giorgio Maggiore. At the same time, another Tuscan, the Florentine Sebastiano Mazzoni (Florence, 1611–Venice, 1678),²⁰ after having moved to Venice in the early 1640s, set out on an already well-consolidated Baroque line. His *Annunciation*, now in the Accademia and datable to the 1650s, is inundated with light and layered with soft, warm, and transparent colors. The viewer's gaze focuses on the unconventional iconography, dream-like and dazed, where an extravagant angel "completely enveloped by the flapping of its wings and by the rich, silky and fluttering fabrics"²¹ bears a greater resemblance to a genie just released from its magic lamp than a divine messenger. Mazzoni holds a place in the debate initiated by the historian Marco Boschini regarding the primacy of color over *disegno*, arousing the ire of the latter for his irreverence with both pen and brush and for an approach considered anachronistic.²² In the explosive period marked by the extenuating siege of Candia, the poet-painter Mazzoni responded in 1661 by publishing *La pittura guerriera*, "a sort of polemical response to the Veneto-centric and anti-Vasarian perspective of Boschini's contemporary *Carta del navigar pitoresco*."²³ In his *Tempo perduto*, a collection of verse dedicated to

¹⁹ Gehrard Ewald, *Johann Carl Loth 1632–1698* (Amsterdam, 1965); Rodolfo Pallucchini, *La pittura veneziana del Seicento*, 2 vols (Venice, 1981), 1:259–65.

²⁰ Paolo Benassai, *Sebastiano Mazzoni* (Florence, 1999).

²¹ Nicola Ivanoff, "Esordi di Sebastiano Mazzoni," *Emporium* 63.5 (1957), 196.

²² Puppi and Rugolo, "Un'ordinaria forma non alletta."

²³ Marco Boschini, *La carta del navigar pitoresco* (Venice, 1660); Massimiliano Rossi, "Introduzione," in Sebastiano Mazzoni, Massimiliano Rossi, and Marco Leone, *La pittura*



Figure 22.3. Pietro Liberi, *Honor Received in Heaven by Glory*, after 1661. Venice, Palazzo Ferro Fini.
(Foto Luca Sassi, Schio-Vicenza).

contemporary artists active in Venice, the Florentine appeals to his friend Pietro Liberi and confides that he will be able to attain immortality thanks to the privilege of sitting for a portrait done by his friend. Mazzoni was certainly unprejudiced, for there was no more “Venetian” painter than Liberi.

A pupil of Padovanino and exponent of *tenebrismo*, Pietro Liberi (Padua, 1605–Venice, 1687) gave birth, through the example of Titian and Veronese, to a “dewy and auburn” style²⁴ permeated by a soft sensuality, a “delicious” manner of painting which brings the mind to rejoice (Fig. 22.3).²⁵ A man of great culture and the most varied interests, Liberi “almost never painted histories but rather many fables and even more hieroglyphics, some of which he alone possibly understood,” and above all he was “the inventor of his style.”²⁶ After a long series of journeys through Italy, Europe, and Istanbul, upon returning to Venice he was able, in 1682, together with Antonio Zanchi and Carl Loth, to emancipate Venetian painters from the masses of the *dipintori* (artisanal painters).²⁷ Awarded by the Republic with the title of Knight of St Mark and later nominated Count-Palatine by Emperor Leopold I, he crowned his prestigious and successful career with the construction of a monumental palace on the Grand Canal from the design of his friend, the painter-poet-architect Sebastiano Mazzoni. Although the greatest part of his production was easel painting, Liberi also worked in frescos: see, for instance, the brilliant examples of the *Apotheosis of Saint Anthony* for the sacristy of the saint in Padua and the complex allegories for the *barchessa* of Villa Foscari in Stra.²⁸

In such a context, Andrea Celesti (Venice, 1638–1710) stands out for a style which is at once rough and turbulent as well as varnished, lit up with hints of gold of a grainy consistency that emphasizes the finest lessons of

Guerriera e altri versi sull'arte (Venice/Verona, 2008), pp. 7–12; Marco Leone, “Sebastiano Mazzoni tra poesia e pittura,” in Mazzoni, Rossi, and Leone, *La pittura Guerriera*, pp. 13–34.

²⁴ Adriano Mariuz, *Antonio Pellegrini a Padova*, in A. Bettagno, ed., *Antonio Pellegrini. Il maestro del Rococò alle corti d'Europa*, catalogo della mostra (Padova, Palazzo della Ragione, 20 settembre 1998–10 gennaio 1999) (Venice, 1998), 23.

²⁵ Anton Maria Zanetti, *Della pittura veneziana e delle opere pubbliche de' veneziani maestri* (Venice, 1771), p. 380.

²⁶ Anton Maria Zanetti, *Descrizione di tutte le pubbliche pitture della città di Venezia . . . o sia rinnovazione delle Ricche Minere di Marco Boschini . . .* (Venice, 1733), p. 55.

²⁷ Elena Favaro, *L'arte dei pittori in Venezia e i suoi statuti* (Florence, 1975).

²⁸ Ugo Ruggeri, *Pietro e Marco Liberi: pittori nella Venezia del Seicento* (Rimini, 1996); Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo, “Pietro Liberi-Domenico Bruni, Stra, villa Foscari Negrelli Rossi,” in F. Pedrocco, ed., *Gli affreschi nei palazzi e nelle ville venete dal '500 al '700* (Vicenza, 2008), pp. 154–61.

Sebastiano Mazzoni, with a final result of “incredible felicity and the wonderful effect of tenderness.”²⁹ “A frothy and iridescent river: strawberry, raspberry, orange, blue changing into pink, all tempered by the snowy quality of the whites”³⁰ is manifested in the large lunette of the left nave in San Zaccaria with *The Doge Giustiniano Partecipazio and the Emperor Leone V l’Armeno receiving from the East the body of San Zaccaria* from the early 1680s.³¹

Born in the Fifties: Bambini, Dorigny, Bellucci, Lazzarini, Molinari

In 1676 the Procuratore di San Marco, Leonardo Pesaro, nephew of the recently deceased Doge Giovanni, gave a demonstration of “superior intelligence” and “greatness of mind”³² by organizing a lavish party in the uncompleted family palace on the Canal Grande at San Stae, the work of Baldassare Longhena. The party was to celebrate two events: the visit of the Apostolic Nuncio and the marriage of the procurator’s daughter Elena to Pietro Contarini.

In 1682, Nicolò Bambini (Venice, 1651–1739), a student of Sebastiano Mazzoni and, in Rome, Carlo Maratta, from whom he learned precision in design and an elegance of forms, painted on the ceiling of a corner room of the palace several canvases forming part of an elaborate structure further enriched by luxuriant wood carvings. In the composition’s center oval depicting *The Triumph of Venice* is the figure of the glorious *Dominante*, a figure of classical beauty inspired by the models of Titian and Veronese filtered through the example of Pietro Liberi. As a whole, the effective coupling of sculpture and painting, perhaps guided by the wise hand of Longhena, is able to link indissolubly the fate of one of Venice’s most important families with the even greater and more mythic destiny of the Republic; both in content and in form, the ensemble proposes a decorative typology whose richness echoes Veronese’s already classic 16th-century ceilings in the Ducal Palace.

²⁹ Zanetti, *Della pittura veneziana*, p. 401.

³⁰ Nicola Ivanoff, “Pitture e sculture de la Rotonda,” in *La Rotonda di Rovigo* (Vicenza, 1967), p. 97.

³¹ Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo, *Venezia barocca. Splendori e illusioni di un mondo in “decadenza,”* (Vicenza, 2009), p. 162.

³² Cristoforo Ivanovich, *Minerva al tavolino, lettere diverse di proposta e risposta a varii personaggi sparse d’alcuni componimenti in prosa et in verso, concernenti per lo più alle vittorie della Lega contra il turco fino questo anno, parte II* (Venice, 1688), p. 127.



Figure 22.4. Louis Dorigny, *Triumph of Aurora*, 1695–98. Venice, Palazzo Zenobio.
(Foto Luca Sassi, Schio-Vicenza).

Louis Dorigny (Paris, 1654–Verona, 1742) arrived to Venice only at the end of the 1670s. But his almost abstract perfection in design, his ability to foreshorten figures and balance light and shadow, his excellence in the science of perspective,³³ his sublime and heroic style learned in Paris under the tutelage of Charles Le Brun, his stay in Rome where he frequented the Academy of St. Luke, and, not least, his being the nephew of Simon Vouet were the factors which, in the last quarter of the 17th century, made Dorigny highly sought-after by those patricians of both Venice and the *terraferma* who were already great admirers of the examples of Roman art and the French *gran gout* then in vogue. From the great canvases of the *portego* of Ca' Tron (1685) to the frescoes in the great hall of Ca' Zenobio (1696–98),³⁴ Dorigny's fame as a restless academic was progressively consolidated, and he provided a lesson from which artists of later generations, such as Ricci, Pellegrini, and Tiepolo, would profit (Fig. 22.4).

Gregorio Lazzarini's *The Alms of San Lorenzo Giustiniani* and Antonio Bellucci's *Vow of Doge Nicolò Contarini to the Blessed Lorenzo Giustiniani for the Cessation of the Plague*, both located in the presbytery of the cathedral of San Pietro in Castello, are linked to the public celebrations of Venice's first patriarch. Canvases of impressive breadth, both were executed in 1691 following Giustiniani's canonization, and they constituted the completion of the great chapel dedicated to the new saintly protector of the Republic's destiny.

Earning the esteem of the prince of the Roman Academy of St. Luke, Carlo Maratta, Gregorio Lazzarini (Venice, 1655–Villabona di Rovigo, 1732) took part in the move towards a “normalization” of Baroque hyperbole through a perfection in *disegno*, in contrast or at least superior to the “color” of the Venetian school.³⁵ His easel production was sought after both in Italy and abroad for the originality of his compositions, as in his *Alms*, where the artist chose to insert his own portrait among the crowd observing the saint who, with a magnanimous gesture, gratifies the needy.³⁶

³³ Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres avec leurs portraits gravés*, 4 vols (Paris, 1762), 1:235.

³⁴ Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo, “Dorigny e Venezia. Da Ca' Tron a Ca' Zenobio e ritorno,” in G. and P. Marini, eds., *Louis Dorigny 1654–1742. Un pittore della corte francese a Verona*, catalogo della mostra, Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio, 28 giugno–2 novembre 2003 (Venice, 2003), 44–50.

³⁵ Mauro Lucco, “Lazzarini Gregorio,” in Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto*, 2:841.

³⁶ Vincenzo da Canal, *Vita di Gregorio Lazzarini* (Venice, 1809), p. XLIII.

This is a work woven together in a perspectival web that brings to mind Veronese but is tempered by a composure deriving from Padovanino.³⁷

The *Vow of Doge Nicolò Contarini to the Blessed Lorenzo Giustiniani* by Antonio Bellucci (Venice, 1654–Pieve di Soligo, 1726), in contrast, is the fruit of mature artist who quickly affirmed himself in the Venetian context, and then moved on to work in Vienna, various German courts, and London. Finally, after his lengthy European wanderings, he retired to Soligo, near Treviso, where he would die. He animates his *Vow of Doge Nicolò Contarini* with bright and luminous chromatic interplay, defining volumes with sharp draftsmanship and a harmonious organization of forms among the monumental architecture, while “the light which illuminates via its reflection” seems to echo the dark tastes of Antonio Zanchi.³⁸

In the early 1680s, Antonio Molinari (Venice, 1655–1704) had freed himself from the style of the *tenebroso* of his master Zanchi through the elaboration of an effective synthesis between Baroque tension and classicist measure. His style can well be appreciated in a work which draws effectively on the style of Luca Giordano, a *Struggle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths*, completed in the late 1690s for the Correr in San Giovanni Decollato and placed together with Gregorio Lazzarini’s *Orpheus punished by the Bacchantes* and Antonio Bellucci’s *Hercules and Onfale*, all presently conserved in Ca’ Rezzonico.³⁹

Quadraturismo

Despite remaining a multicolored city during the 17th century, thanks to its frescoed façades, Venice continued for much of the century to prefer canvases or “*cuori d’oro*” (engraved and gilded skins) for its interiors. If we were to believe the words of the merchant Simon Giogalli, Luca Giordano’s agent in Venice, painters in the city on the lagoon in 1692 “who with oils can pass for expert painters,” in fresco “appear ridiculous, in fact here such a style of painting is little used, as the plaster does not hold due to the air’s saltiness.”⁴⁰ This testimony—certainly conditioned by the merchant’s interest in promoting the abilities of the Neapolitan school of frescoers—should not be given too much credence, in any case, once we

³⁷ Pallucchini, *La pittura veneziana*, p. 378.

³⁸ Pallucchini, *La pittura veneziana*, p. 371.

³⁹ Alberto Craievich, *Antonio Molinari* (Soncino, 2005).

⁴⁰ Cited in Lanfranco Ravelli, “Un pittore partenopeo a Bergamo: Nicola Malinconico e le sue ‘Historiae Sacrae’ per Santa Maria Maggiore,” *Atti dell’Ateneo di Scienze Lettere ed Arti di Bergamo* 48 (1987–88, 1989), p. 117.

consider the renewed fortunes this type of painting registered, particularly in Venice in the second half of the century, at least as far as churches are concerned: first Pietro Ricchi (Lucca, 1606–Udine, 1675) in the cloister of Santi Giovanni e Paolo and in San Giuseppe di Castello, together with the *quadraturista* Pietro Antonio Torri from Bologna and later the Roman (and student of Pietro da Cortona) Girolamo Pellegrini (Rome, 1624–Venice? post-1700) in the vault of the presbytery and in the apsidal *cantina* in San Pietro di Castello, in the apse of San Zaccaria, in the Sagredo chapel in San Francesco della Vigna, and in the cupola of Santi Cosmi e Damiano in the Giudecca. In San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti, the ceiling was painted “by fresco with a most lovely architecture by Faustin Moretti of Brescia with the figures of *Cavalier Liberi*”;⁴¹ in San Martino di Castello, one could admire “the vault of the sacristy” decorated “by fresco with beautiful architecture by Simone Guglielmi da Piove [di Sacco] and the figures of Antonio Zanchi,” while Domenico Bruni and Giacomo Pedrali, two other artists from Brescia, had worked on the heavens for the nave. Wall paintings covered the Church of the Ognissanti through the work of Agostino Litterini, and in San Luca the work of Domenico Bruni;⁴² just as in 1675 the newly rebuilt church of San Silvestro was waiting for its vast ceiling to be “painted in fresco along with other ornaments.”⁴³ For this work, the choice in 1682 would fall upon the young Louis Dorigny, who had only recently arrived in the city.

The ceilings of churches and palaces were in many cases characterized by the simultaneous presence of painted figures and ephemeral architectural forms (*quadratura*), the latter painted by specialized artists. Such a stratagem, of clearly theatrical provenance, was used to amplify artificially the architectonic space. Beginning in the 1660s, Bolognese *quadratura* made its appearance in the territories of the Republic as well, richer and more articulated with the infusion of vegetal and floral elements compared to that already in use with origins in Brescia, which stood out for the tight, regular intervals of its design. The Bolognese school established itself with success thanks to its principal exponents Pietro Antonio Cerva, Pietro Antonio Torri, Antonio Felice Ferrari and Ferdinando Fochi, leading finally in the first decades of the new century to the production of the

⁴¹ Nicolò Doglioni, *Le cose notabili et maravigliose della città di Venetia* (Venice, 1675), p. 158.

⁴² Francesca Flores d'Arcais, “La grande decorazione nel Veneto,” in Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto*, 2:645–70.

⁴³ Doglioni, *Le cose notabili*, p. 160.

ferrarese Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna, who would become the ingenious assistant to Giovanni Battista Tiepolo.

An extraordinary theatrical effect is unleashed by the *Martyrdom and the Glorification of San Pantalon* covering the entire vault of the homonymous church, realized by Giovanni Antonio Fumiani (Venice, 1645–1710) (Fig. 22.5). The largest canvas ceiling in the world had not yet been commenced in 1697⁴⁴ and seemed well on its way by October 1706, when it was unveiled at the request of Teresa Cunegonda Sobieska, the wife of the Elector of Bavaria who was passing through Venice.⁴⁵ The long affair of its completion, certainly concluded by the year of the painter's death in 1710, echoed the long and troubled reconstruction of the building to which the architect Baldassare Longhena also contributed. Fumiani's participation in the preparation of sets of musical dramas, particularly in the ducal theater in Piacenza in 1669,⁴⁶ and the lessons of his master Domenico degli Ambrogi,⁴⁷ whom he frequented in Bologna as a youth, allowed him to create a "macchina" that would even be defined "useless."⁴⁸ It was, in fact, a magnificent apparatus to be employed as a perpetual *sacra rappresentazione* whose protagonist is Pantaleone, the Nicomedian doctor martyred under the Emperor Diocletian. The debt to Paolo Veronese is immediately recognizable, with colors at times diaphanous, at times luminous, often iridescent, and while the artist seems to recall Michelangelo's work in the Sistine Chapel as well, he reinterprets the latter with an utterly Baroque emphasis. There would seem to be no doubt about the strong influence of Andrea Pozzo, who was frescoing the vault of Sant'Ignazio in Rome from 1691 to 1694, especially considering that Fumiani's *Perspectiva pictorum architectorum* was published in the same city in 1693.

At the End of the Century: Between Classicism and the Nascent Barochetto

It would be arduous to try to establish rigid barriers between the diverse artistic currents that coexisted in Venice in the last quarter of the 17th century, particularly using anachronistic mental categories. Indeed, there

⁴⁴ Pietro Antonio Pacifico, *Cronica Veneta, ovvero Succinto racconto di tutte le cose più cospicue, & antiche della Città di Venetia* (Venice, 1697), p. 434.

⁴⁵ Cited in Franca Zava Boccazzi, "I veneti della Galleria Conti di Lucca (1704–1707)," *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 17 (1990), 141.

⁴⁶ Franco Mancini, Maria Teresa Muraro, and Elena Povoledo, *I Teatri di Venezia*, 4 vols (Venice, 1985), vol. 1: *Teatri effimeri e nobili imprenditori*.

⁴⁷ Laura Rossetti, "Annotazioni su Giovanni Antonio Fumiani," *Arte documento* 9 (1996), 145.

⁴⁸ Roberto Longhi, *Viatico per cinque secoli di pittura veneziana* (Florence, 1946), p. 33.



Figure 22.5. Giovanni Antonio Fumiani, *Glory of St. Pantaleon*, circa 1697–1710. Venice, Church of San Pantalon. (Foto Luca Sassi, Schio-Vicenza).

is no reason to imagine a clear preference on the part of patrons for the nascent *barocchetto* to the detriment of a classicism along the lines of Carlo Maratta. And if it is impossible to argue for homogeneity among the artists active in this period of time, given that in the city there were “as many styles as there were painters,”⁴⁹ such a variety was seen by contemporaries as anything but troubling; it was generally perceived as a source of richness and strength. This can be verified, for example, in a public context such as that of the Scuola Grande della Carità.⁵⁰ In 1700, the Scuola’s chapter was discussing the possibility of renovating the building’s interior decorative apparatus,⁵¹ and for the occasion requests were sent to artists different in both age and style: Giovanni Antonio Fiumani, Gregorio Lazzarini, Simone Brentana, Giovanni Segala, Sebastiano Ricci, Antonio Balestra, and Angelo Trevisani (Fig. 22.6). When the decorative campaign was concluded, on 3 April 1704, Doge Alvise II Mocenigo made an official visit to the Scuola and “saw every niche covered with wonderful paintings of the most famous brushes of the present century.”⁵² If public patrons showed no particular predilection for one style or another, there is no reason to assume such a preference on the part of private citizens for the *avanguardie*. An example to this effect is represented by the proper blend of classicism and *barocchetto* present by the beginning of the 18th century in the hall of Palazzo Pisani in Santo Stefano.⁵³ Dorigny and Balestra on one side and Ricci and Pellegrini on the other face off in an artistic contest where, happily, it is a rigor in *disegno* that prevails and, far from clipping the wings of the so-called *coloristi*, it merely confers them a singular and unusual luster. In 1709, Gregorio Barbarigo of Santa Maria del Giglio called upon Balestra, together with Ricci and Bambini, to execute a large canvas “of a history of his most excellent House” to be placed in the *portego* of their seigniorial palace on the Grand Canal. The celebratory paintings of the glories of the Barbarigo line would be added to the others already *in situ*, defined as “modern paintings” and portraying the “histories” of the

⁴⁹ Zanetti, *Della pittura veneziana*, p. 396; Craievich, *Antonio Molinari*, pp. 11–30.

⁵⁰ Bernard Aikema, “Molinari & Co.: Riflessioni sul Momento Internazionale Della Pittura Veneziana fra Sei e Settecento,” *Arte veneta* 63 (2006, 2007), 203–08.

⁵¹ Lino Moretti, “Documenti e appunti su Sebastiano Ricci (con qualche altro cenno su altri pittori del Settecento),” *Saggi e memorie di storia dell’arte* 11 (1978), 106–07.

⁵² Cited in Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo, “Con pena, e con penello’: Simone Brentana e Sebastiano Ricci,” *Verona Illustrata* 22 (2009), 45.

⁵³ Marinelli, “L’arrivo di Dorigny nelle sue nuove patrie,” pp. 82–83; Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo, “Un pittore ‘reale.’ Riflessioni su Louis Dorigny,” *Studi veneziani*, n.s. 50 (2005, 2006), 156.



Figure 22.6. Gregorio Lazzarini, *The Alms of St. Lorenzo Giustiniani*, circa 1691. Venice. Church of San Pietro di Castello.
(Foto Luca Sassi, Schio-Vicenza).

family, by Zanchi, Celesti, Fiumani, Daniel Heintz, Lazzarini, Molinari, and Bellucci, painted at the end of the century that had just come to a close.⁵⁴ New and old artists, both in terms of age and style, thus stood side by side, unable to escape comparison and, perhaps, dialogue. Such that, already in 1690, Dorigny, Zanchi, Loth, Fiumani, Cervelli, Bellucci, Lazzarini, and Bambini had begun to campaign for the formation of a permanent “Academy of Human Bodies” in Venice and, thus, the definitive emancipation of painting which, until 1682, was still considered the dominion of the guild of the *dipintori*.⁵⁵

At the start of the Settecento, excess and emphasis slowly began to be mitigated in the daily life of the ruling classes. A lighter register dictated by *le bon goût* of the esthetics of the rococo gradually asserted itself, albeit in the Venetian *barocchetto* fashion. An interest in small objects and in the ephemeral qualities of the senses arose, with attention directed increasingly towards expressions of affection. Pomp and luxury were cherished, and together with the exaltation of sensitivity, of the good taste that constitutes the art of living, became distinctive criteria. An esthetic sensibility came to the fore that overturned the previous concepts: what is minuscule becomes grandiose, courtly and heroic, and vice versa, as in the *Riccio rapito* of Alexander Pope.⁵⁶

Part Two: The 18th Century: The Golden Twilight

It is by now commonplace to portray 18th-century Venice as indulgent, extravagant, and even sexually permissive. This was a reputation that was time and again confirmed by official and occasional foreign visitors and Grand Tourists, and it persisted throughout the era.⁵⁷ The months-long carnival season and Casanova’s adventures, well known beyond the Venetian borders, only added more of the same flavor to this image of frivolity and hedonism. At least this is how Venice appeared on the surface. A typical

⁵⁴ Favilla and Rugolo, *Venezia barocca*, p. 190.

⁵⁵ Favaro, *L'arte dei pittori in Venezia*.

⁵⁶ Massimo Favilla and Ruggero Rugolo, *Venezia '700. Arte e società nell'ultimo secolo della Serenissima* (Vicenza, 2011), 13–17.

⁵⁷ Edward Gibbon, for instance, remarked in his memoirs: “The spectacle of Venice afforded some hours of astonishment and some days of disgust.” See, for a wealth of examples of specifically the English Grand Tourist, Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations Since the Renaissance* (London/Portland, Ore., 1998; rev. ed. Routledge, 2000); also Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven, 1996).

northern mindset may account for this negative impression, but, given the numerous reports on the topic, it seems mandatory to give it some credit.

Venice, as a matter of fact, had become more and more politically isolated in Europe and out of date, like the rest of Italy. As a city it survived, but as a power and state it no longer was an important and active player in the international political arena. Its sea and mercantile power dwindled, and the empire had become significantly smaller in size after the last war the city of the doges fought against the Ottomans; an exhausting and humiliating war which concluded in 1718 with the Peace of Passarowitz. But despite its declining trade, Venice could keep itself splendidly alive thanks to the wealth and capital accumulated in the past, and invested in land. The state and its institutions and, for that matter, the state's component parts—the members of the patrician ruling class—would go a long way towards keeping the “myth” of the Most Serene Republic alive and credible; and the visual arts proved to be highly instrumental in this. In this last century of the Venetian Republic, its leading artists definitely belonged to the highest European rank. This was not only true for the visual arts. The city showed a high degree of vitality in all its cultural expressions, ranging from music to literature, to theater and architecture.

A wide array of different styles coexisted in the visual arts of the Settecento.⁵⁸ The language of the last decades of the previous century continued well into the age. This may be partially due to a certain reluctance to break away from the 17th-century taste, which may explain why well-established “old-fashioned” artists—such as Bambini and Balestra, who had set the tone in the last quarter of the previous century—were still in high demand. The more dramatic vein inherited from the Seicento proved to be equally popular, while for historical and allegorical scenes the preference for the grand manner persisted. At the same time, different and new styles, also triggered by the introduction of new genres, kept evolving while the age progressed. Provinciality, much in contrast to the political and commercial waning of the *Serenissima*, is not exactly the term that

⁵⁸ General surveys can be found in Pallucchini, *La pittura nel Veneto* (2 vols); Egidio Martini, *La pittura del Settecento veneto* (Udine, 1982); Michael Levey, *Eighteenth Century Venice* (London, 1980); Egidio Martini, *La pittura veneziana del Settecento* (Venice, 1964); and an introductory survey in Bernard Aikema, “La Pittura del Settecento a Venezia,” in Roberto Contini and Clelia Ginetti, eds., *La pittura in Italia: Il Settecento*, 2 vols (Milan, 1989–90), 1:169–217. The only major primary source on Venetian painting of the 18th Century is Zanetti, *Della pittura veneziana*.

comes to mind if one assesses the quality and variety of styles and media practiced in the visual arts.

The Grand Manner

It was specifically the wealthy patricians, whether of ancient descent or recently admitted into the nobility, who, as the most important commissioners of the arts, embraced the models of the great decorative schemes. In profane buildings, lavish and programmatic interior decorative cycles had been, to a high degree, a prerogative of the Ducal Palace. The private palaces of the ruling class, in comparison, were perhaps decorated more soberly and might lack a single coherent scheme, but this would start changing towards the later Seicento and would reach its peak by the middle of the following century.⁵⁹ The splendor and sophistication in intricacy and quality of these decorations could easily rival the decorative schemes and cycles of the Florentine and Roman High Baroque. Facing the gradual draining of the state's resources, a process that accelerated dramatically during the War of Candia, the Venetian Senate could no longer keep the noble ranks closed; practically for the first time since 1297, a number of extremely wealthy families who were willing to pay a high price for the much-desired noble title, were admitted to the ranks of nobility around the middle of the 17th century. But as Francis Haskell had so sharply pointed out, innovation in thought and behavior were the last things to be expected from them: These "newcomers" would do everything to be accepted by the older aristocracy, and consciously conformed to the *status quo*.⁶⁰

This was not altogether true for the arts, however. Monumental decoration in private palaces in the city soared starting shortly before and long after the turn of the century, and it was unmistakably fueled by the rivalry between old and new families, each attempting to outshine the other. In this, some members of the new nobility took the lead and proved less conformist. They ventured out in decoration types new to Venice, based

⁵⁹ Some families had embellished their palaces with conspicuous art collections, see Linda Borean and Stefania Mason, eds., *Il collezionismo d'arte a Venezia: il Settecento* (Venice, 2009, 2009); Borean and Mason, eds., *Il collezionismo d'arte a Venezia: il Seicento* (Venice, 2007); Michel Hochman, Rosella Lauber, and Stefania Mason, eds., *Il collezionismo d'arte a Venezia: dalle origini al Cinquecento* (Venice, 2008); and Borean and Mason, eds., *Il collezionismo d'arte*.

⁶⁰ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (1963; rev. and enlarged ed. New Haven, 1980; Ital. trans., 1985), p. 247.

on the grant schemes of Bologna and Rome and abandoning those of the Ducal Palace, and they introduced—often in combination—new architectural elements that broke with the typological vernacular of the Venetian palazzo, such as doubly high ballrooms and open monumental staircases. The spectacularly frescoed ballroom of Palazzo Zenobio discussed above, whose owners originated from Verona, forms a good example. Some of the older Venetian families were eager to continue this love of display.⁶¹ The concept of *magnificenza* lastly gained its way into the city's private domain,⁶² perhaps at the expense of the interests of the state; heroes of antique history started to inhabit the palaces on the main island as well, as they had already done in the villas and dwellings on the *terraferma* much earlier.⁶³ Representation became as important a value for private families as it had been for the state at large.

A comparison between the new frescoes for the ballroom of Palazzo Dolfin, dating around 1710, and those executed for Palazzo Labia by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, the genius of the century, some 35 years later, illustrates well how the taste for monumental fresco decoration introduced by the Zenobio towards the end of the 17th century continued to prevail.

The Dolfin, a well-respected family of the old style whose members had played a key role in the political, military, and literary life of the Republic had commissioned the already-mentioned Bambini, together with the *quadraturista* Antonio Felice Ferrari, to depict the virtues of the state and of their family on the ceiling.⁶⁴ Simulated architecture in the shape of a huge undulating balustrade, in denial of the actual rectangular shape of the room, extends optically and dramatically the appearance of the space. Intertwined with simulated sculpture, it forms the frame for the groups of allegorical figures that swirl towards heaven and look down at the viewer. It was meant to overwhelm.⁶⁵

Tiepolo, who apprenticed to Gregorio Lazzarini, was already in his mature years and was unanimously recognized as the greatest painter

⁶¹ Such as the Pesaro family, Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, p. 249.

⁶² A theoretical justification for the display of one's status, developed by the 15th century humanist and theorist Leon Battista Alberti.

⁶³ A theme elaborated by Andrea Gottdang, *Venedigs antike Helden: die Darstellung der antiken Geschichte in der venezianischen Malerei von 1680 bis 1760* (Munich, 1999), pp. 89–154. See also Klara Garas, "Allegorie und Geschichte in der Venezianischen Malerei des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Acta Historiae Artium* 11 (1965), 275–302.

⁶⁴ Adriano Mariuz, "La 'Magnifica Sala' di Palazzo Dolfin a Venezia, gli affreschi di Nicolò Bambini e Antonio Felice Ferrari," *Arte Veneta* 35 (1981), 182–86.

⁶⁵ The *portego* serves now as the official reception hall of the University of Venice.

in Venice when he accepted the commission from the Labia, successful businessmen from Catalan origin, to design the murals for the ballroom of their palace.⁶⁶ Upon entering, the viewer is struck by the overpowering illusionistic architecture that embraces the whole space and virtually opens up all the walls. Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna had collaborated with Tiepolo on other enterprises, previously designing the “stage” for the historical scenes.⁶⁷ One immediately wonders which of the two artists had acted as the director in such an orchestral composition. Judging by its successful effect, one thing is clear: there must have been a symbiosis between the *figurista* and the *quadraturista* in a continual and dynamic interplay of mutual inspiration; a symbiosis that may have also meant making concessions to one another.⁶⁸ The key scene is represented in the *Banquet of Cleopatra with Antonius*. With a grand gesture while maintaining supreme inner calm, the last queen of Egypt is about to drop the pearl into her glass of wine. Her composure should convince Antonius of the fact that she can easily afford to waste such a precious gem. Although the iconography may allude to the proverbial riches of the Labia, the chosen scenes may have had a deeper implicit meaning. Could they be seen, perhaps, as the visually expressed attempt at higher political aspirations? (Fig. 22.7)⁶⁹

Tiepolo, born in 1697, had started painting independently well before 1720. His early work, under the influence of Federico Bencovich and Giovanni Battista Piazzetta and not without a vein of brutality,⁷⁰ was

⁶⁶ The family had settled down in Venice in 1528, and entered the *Libro d'Oro* in 1646. See, for the family Labia, Terisio Pignatti, Filippo Pedrocco, Elisabetta Martinelli Pedrocco, *Palazzo Labia a Venezia* (Turin, 1982). The first standard work on G. B. Tiepolo was by Antonio Morassi, *A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings of G. B. Tiepolo* (London, 1962); see, for the “opera completa” of Tiepolo’s paintings, Massimo Gemin and Filippo Pedrocco, *Giambattista Tiepolo. I dipinti. Opera completa* (Venice, 1993). For the young Tiepolo, see Exh. cat. (Udine, 2011), *Il giovane Tiepolo: la scoperta della luce* (Udine, 2011).

⁶⁷ Adriano Mariuz (ed. Giuseppe Pavanello), *Tiepolo* (Verona 2008); Adriano Mariuz, *Le storie di Antonio e Cleopatra. Giambattista Tiepolo e Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna a Palazzo Labia* (Venice, 2004); Gottdang, *Venedigs antike Helden*, pp. 215–40; and Keith Christiansen, “Tiepolo, Theatre, and the Notion of Theatricality,” *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999), 665–92.

⁶⁸ Possible tensions between Colonna and Tiepolo are discussed in Svetlana Alpers and Michael Baxandell, *Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence* (New Haven/London, 1994), pp. 93–99. See also, and for a deeper study of the collaboration between *quadraturista* and *figurista* in general, Matthias Bleyl, *Deckenmalerei des 18. Jahrhundert. Die hoheKunst der Dekoration im Zeitalters Tiepolo* (Munich, 2005).

⁶⁹ Suggested by Gottdang, *Venedigs antike Helden*, pp. 215–40.

⁷⁰ Da Canal, in his biography of Lazzarini, inserted an overview of Tiepolo’s work, stating with some regret, so it seems, in the opening phrases, that he had abandoned the “*maniera*” of his teacher. Giannantonio Moschini, ed., Vincenzo da Canal, *Vita di Gregorio Lazzarini* (1732) (Venice, 1809), p. xxxi.



Figure 22.7. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *Banquet of Cleopatra*, 1746–1747. Venice, Palazzo Labia.

characterized by a heavy, somewhat pathetic and dramatic atmosphere, strong chiaroscuro, and muscular figures, as clearly shown in his *Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew* in the church of San Stae.⁷¹ Later, these were replaced by effigies in gracefully studied poses, reminiscent of the repertoire adopted in the theater and rendered in a bright palette of colors. The artist was prolific in many different genres and had a vast output. In addition to his enormous production on paper, he executed many oil paintings on canvas. But throughout his career, in which he was later assisted by his two sons, Domenico and Lorenzo, he was especially in demand as a decorator working in the medium of fresco, in which he excelled. His overpowering artistic personality dominated the age, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Almost all contemporary critics liked to compare Giovanni Battista Tiepolo to Veronese.⁷² This equation goes also to show how little Tiepolo was seen as a product of his own time. More than had been the case with any other painter before him, the aesthetic and stylistic conceptions of Veronese were indeed fully reawakened. To Tiepolo, the frescoes and canvases of his 16th-century predecessor proved to be valuable as prototypes in his great schemes of decoration for the many homes and dwellings of affluent and powerful commissioners, not only in Venice or in the towns on the mainland or in Milan but also at the distant courts of Würzburg and of Madrid, where he spent his final years. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo was a Venetian, certainly, but he could be also claimed as a European, or as—and this is perhaps a more appropriate term for the age—a cosmopolitan, who more than any other artist of his time can be associated with the spirit of the *ancien régime*.

A similar pattern of grand decorations can be observed in the religious institutions, whose patronage was primarily dominated by the same aristocracy. The orders were competing with each other in the splendors of their commissions to the leading artists. It feels somehow more appropriate, though, to look at the elaborate apotheoses of Christ, Mary, or of saints surrounded by a whirl of angels and clouds on the ceilings of churches than at glorious celebrations of still-living members of the Venetian patrician class. Even a painter like Giovanni Battista Piazzetta, while still rooted in the style of the *tenebrosi* and attempting to break

⁷¹ Executed in 1722. See footnote 80, William L. Barcham, *The Religious Paintings of Giambattista Tiepolo: Piety and Tradition in Eighteenth-Century Venice* (Oxford, 1989), 42–43; Gemin and Pedrocco, *Giambattista Tiepolo*, pp. 57–58 and 232.

⁷² See specifically the chapter on this topic in Alpers and Baxandall, *Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence*, pp. 21–30.

away from it, dared to try his luck in the contest for the ceiling of the newly completed chapel dedicated to Saint Dominicus in the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo (Fig. 22.8).⁷³ Fourteen years Tiepolo's senior, Piazzetta designed for this occasion his one and only ceiling piece, on canvas, that may even have been of inspiration to his younger rival. From steps, friars in their black and white attire watch how their founder rises up towards heaven accompanied by music-making angels. The black cloaks of the Dominicans form rhythmic points of rest in the overall ensemble of colors that fade into depth. Shades of apricot dominate the scene. In the company of a large crowd, the chapel was inaugurated in 1726.

More representative of Piazzetta's later style in religious art forms is one of his masterpieces executed for the church of the Gesuati at the Zattere,⁷⁴ where another branch of the Dominicans had commissioned Giorgio Massari to erect a completely new building which would mirror the Redentore of Palladio on the opposite side of the Giudecca Canal. The interior offers in its decorative program an almost complete gallery of the principal Dominican saints. Here, in this monument of Settecento art where all three media are well represented and complementary to each other, the painter in near-monochrome tones harked back to his earlier more expressive style. His legacy culminated in the works of his prolific school, to be seen in the church of the Pietà on the Riva degli Schiavoni.⁷⁵ This church of a hospital for orphans, famous in its time for its music performances under the guidance of Vivaldi, constituted, like the Gesuati, yet another celebration of 18th-century art designed in one go.⁷⁶ One can imagine how the music of Vivaldi and his contemporaries must have complemented the interior, or vice versa.

However, artists who had ventured into new stylistic directions during the first quarter of the century were ultimately less requested by aristocratic

⁷³ The other rivals had been the young Tiepolo and Mattia Bortoloni. Adriano Mariuz, *L'opera completa del Piazzetta* (Milan, 1982), pp. 84–85; Favilla, Pedrocco, and Ruggolo, *Venezia barocca*, pp. 200–03; See in general the monograph of Georgo Knox, *Giambattista Piazzetta 1682–1754* (Oxford, 1992).

⁷⁴ Altar-piece depicting *St. Louis Bertrand with St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Hyacinth*, 1735–37. For the church of the Gesuati, see Antonio Niero and Filippo Pedrocco, *Chiesa dei Gesuati: arte e devozione* (Venice, 1994); and Antonio Niero, *Tre artisti per un tempio: Santa Maria del Rosario—Gesuati, Venezia* (Venice, 2006).

⁷⁵ In general on Piazzetta's school, see Exh. cat. (Venice, 1983), *Giambattista Piazzetta. Il suo tempo, la sua scuola*, ed. Rodolfo Pallucchini (Venice, 1983); and Rafaello Padovan, "Giambattista Piazzetta e la sua scuola," in *Egidio dall'Olio 1705–2005* (Vicenza, 2009), pp. 33–86.

⁷⁶ Aikema and Meijers, *Nel regno dei poveri*, pp. 197–215.



Figure 22.8. Giambattista Piazzetta, *Apotheosis of St. Dominic*, 1727. Venice, Church of St. John and Paul.

commissioners. A number of the ablest painters of Venice sought their fortunes abroad. As international decorators, painters such as Antonio Pellegrini, Jacopo Amigoni, and the two Ricci, Marco and Sebastiano, and later on Canaletto, Tiepolo, and also Rosalba Carriera—whom Orlandi mentioned already in 1704 as “degna miniatrice”⁷⁷—were called on elsewhere, outside of their country. Each left for a variety of different reasons. It is remarkable to note that Pellegrini, Amigoni, and Rosalba were ultimately more successful abroad or with foreigners, probably on account of their French-like rococo style, whereas Ricci, Canaletto, and Tiepolo exported a style identified *par excellence* with Venice. Especially Antonio Pellegrini, who can be recognized by his lightness and gaiety of touch and his palette of rose, yellow, pale green, pink, and violet, conquered a wide-ranging circle of commissioners in England, Germany, Flanders, Holland, Austria, and Bohemia. His travels exposed him to a variety of foreign influences, the greatest being that of the Flemish baroque artist Rubens.⁷⁸ The older Sebastiano Ricci was no less itinerant. His career and his quite unsettled and animated existence brought him in his earlier years to various Italian cities and to the court of Vienna. He also accepted commissions in London and surroundings and left England for Paris, again in the company of his nephew Marco. In all his peregrinations, Ricci worked for patrons in the highest echelon of society.⁷⁹ With the exception of Tiepolo, it seems that a simple need for internationalization in an increasingly provincial city—beyond the lack of opportunities at home—must have triggered mobility as well. Moreover, the demand abroad for international decorators was peaking in these early decades.

The cycle of 12 paintings depicting the apostles made for the presbytery of the church of San Stae is a telling example of the initial happy coexistence of the various styles of both established and upcoming artists, of the old and younger generation, of those that continued working in the classicist style, or in the more dramatic manner, with those that introduced new aesthetic and coloristic effects. Niccolò Bambini and Gregorio Lazzarini, Tiepolo and Piazzetta, Antonio Pellegrini and Sebastiano Ricci

⁷⁷ Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi, *Abecedario pittorico* [...] corretto e notabilmente di nuove notizie accresciuto da Pietro Guarienti (Venice, 1753).

⁷⁸ George Knox, *Antonio Pellegrini 1675–1741* (Oxford, 1995).

⁷⁹ The first complete monograph of Ricci was Jeffery Daniels, *Sebastiano Ricci* (Hove, 1976); see also Annalisa Scarpa Sonino, *Sebastiano Ricci. Catalogue raisonné* (Milan, 2006); and Exh. Cat. (Venice, 2010), *Le arti di Piranesi: architetto, incisore, antiquario, vedutista, designer*, ed. Michele De Lucchi, Adam Lowe, and Giuseppe Pavanello (Venice, 2010).

all worked in this same experimental setting thanks to the bequest of a Venetian aristocrat who died in 1722.⁸⁰

The grand style also persisted in the official portraits of Venetian doges, procurators, admirals, or other dignitaries, for which painters such as Bartolomeo Nazari, Pietro Uberti, and Alessandro Longhi are good representatives.⁸¹ Often life-size, they impress at first sight for their rhetorical qualities in their continuation of the baroque repertoire. We see this still evidenced in the late example of Alessandro Longhi's portrait of Admiral Antonio Renier at the Musei Civici of Padua. The white of the long curly wig contrasts with the red of the elegant and fashionable outfit, shoes included. The heavy gold-colored cloak loosely draped over Renier's shoulders, the stick of command, and the typical hat provide Renier with the dignity of his rank. All emphasis is placed on his status, including his confident smile. Made in 1765, his pompous appearance comes across as anachronistic and rather fits in the *grand siècle* of Louis XIV.

The representative portraits of state officials were not the models that inspired Rosalba Carriera. She supplemented the genre of portraiture with a whole new flavor. In line, in color, and in brushstrokes, but applied in the medium of the pastel, Carriera showed great affinity with Pellegrini, her brother-in-law. She was the only female artist of Venice who gained international fame with her pretty middle-sized crayons, and she counted many rulers from northern European courts among her clientele.⁸² Numerous, chiefly British, foreigners of high social standing did not neglect to swing by her *bottega* for an appointment, when in Venice. Her chalky, powder box-like works almost reveal the intimate thoughts and worries of the sitter. The first attempts at psychological enquiries, employed previously in this genre by Tiberio Tinelli and later Sebastiano Bombelli, obtained in her hands a completely new dimension. With no trace of any sense of drama, she couples likeness and a soft sensuality to informality and directness without leaving out a good deal of idealization. A typical "female" approach, perhaps, but also much liked by her

⁸⁰ Bequest of Andrea Stazio, published by Lino Moretti, "La data degli Apostoli di San Stae," *Arte Veneta* 27 (1973), 318–20.

⁸¹ Paolo Delorenzi, *La galleria di Minerva: il ritratto di rappresentanza nella Venezia del Settecento* (Venice, 2009).

⁸² Bernardina Sani, *Rosalba carriera: lettere, diari, frammenti* (Florence, 1985); Sani, *Rosalba Carriera* (Venice, 1988); Exh. cat. (Venice, 2007), *Rosalba Carriera "prima pittrice de l'Europa"*, ed. Giuseppe Pavanello (Venice, 2007); Andreas Henning and Harald Marx, "Das Kabinett der Rosalba": *Rosalba Carriera und die Pastelle der Dresdener Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister* (Berlin, 2007); and Pavanello, ed., *Rosalba Carriera*.

male customers. It is worthwhile to note that the several assistants and disciples she had were almost all women, trained in this very style and technique of pastels (Fig. 22.9).

Sculpture performed an important role in adorning churches and palaces or in complementing the decorations of interiors. This medium presented less overpowering personalities in this time period if compared to painting, but were, on average, of high quality. The Bellunese Andrea Brustolon stands out here.⁸³ He distinguished himself specifically in the carving of wood. In style, his elaborately chiseled furniture, frames, and statues seamlessly blend in with the ostentatious surroundings of the above-described interiors of Venetian palaces. The combination of different kind of woods in the same work accounts for a coloristic effect. And what an eye for variations in detail he showed! Giuseppe Torretti should be mentioned as well. Like Brustolon, he bridges the Seicento and Settecento; and his most important patrons were the Manin family, who produced the last doge.⁸⁴ His style was characterized by a baroque taste tempered by classical tendencies solidified after a trip to Rome. The *Assumption* group that crowns the gable of the façade of the church of the Gesuiti, dominated by the clapping wings of the triumphant angels, is a noticeable example and cannot be overlooked when approaching the Fondamente Nove by *vaporetto*.

A more delicate style was inaugurated by the slightly younger Corradini. His almost virtuoso ease in the handling of stone can be admired in an allegorical bust of a veiled woman on display in the Ca'Rezzonico, the museum dedicated to the 18th century. He challenged the material of marble by making the veil look truly transparent. His career had taken him to several central European countries and concluded in Naples, where he executed a large part of his oeuvre.⁸⁵ Those sculptors belonging to the next generation operated overall in a style that clearly yielded to the rococo taste, like Morlaiter, whose reliefs and statues were requested in stone. His medium and his style successfully matched up with, for

⁸³ Exh. cat. (Belluno, 2009), *Andrea Brustolon 1662–1732 “il Michelangelo del legno,”* ed. Anna Maria Spiazzi (Milan, 2009).

⁸⁴ Martina Frank, “Giuseppe Torretti al servizio dei Manin,” *Memoire storiche fuorigiuliesi* 66 (1986), 65–200; Paola Rossi, “Per il catalogo delle opere veneziane di Gisueppe Torretti,” *Arte documento* 13 (1999), 284–89; Andrea Bacchi, *La scultura a Venezia da Sansovino a Canova* (Milan, 2000).

⁸⁵ Bruno Cogo, Antonio Corradini scultore veneziano 1688–1752 (Este, 1996).



Figure 22.9. Rosalba Carriera, *Portrait of Caterina Sagredo Barbarigo*, 1730s, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.

instance, the architecture and painted decorations of the church of the Gesuati at the Zattere.⁸⁶

Stucco work, a very specific segment of sculpture, often framed opulently the large-scale decorations.⁸⁷ The outstanding master in this *métier* was Abbondio Stazio, originally from Ticino.⁸⁸ In Palazzo Albrizzi, the sculptor had the paintings of the ceiling and walls of the *portego*, executed on canvas, encircled with lavish scrolls and *putti* that appear to keep the cornice in place. This elaborate sculptural decoration was executed around the turn of the century. Another eloquent example forms Palazzo Barbaro-ex-Curtis.⁸⁹ But stucco work could, in and of itself, beautify a place. This was spectacularly done by the same Stazio in Palazzo Sagredo. The family had rooms of their more intimate mezzanine redecorated in 1718 after a fire.⁹⁰ Assisted by his pupil, Carpofofo Mazzetti Tencalla, the artist created for various rooms an ensemble of polychrome stucco that features exotic animals rendered practically life-size, along with birds, trophies, and arabesques. A brightly colored greenish-blue cloth is draped all around, playfully overlapping here and there the cornice of the ceiling; monkeys jump out from underneath, and panthers partially covered by it sit like pets on top of the doorways (Fig. 22.10). The decorative and figurative elements are treated in an extremely vigorous and plastic way and are coated with a symphony of refined colors. With its polychrome it mimics and emulates the effect of painted decoration; even stronger. It actually outstrips illusionist painting because of its very three-dimensional nature. Given the relatively small size of the rooms, this enchanting stucco decoration has a very direct impact on the beholder.

Visions of the City

A great deal of the glamour and glory of the state as presented to foreigners can be sensed in visual records that document traditional Venetian

⁸⁶ Anton Ress, *Giovanni Maria Morlaiter. Ein Venezianischer Bildhauer des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1979).

⁸⁷ Mario Fogliata and Maria Lucia Sartor, *L'arte dello stucco: storie, tecniche, metodologie della tradizione veneziana* (Treviso, 2004).

⁸⁸ See in general for the presence of Swiss *stuccadori* in Venice, Giorgio Mollisi, ed., *Svizzeri a Venezia nella storia nell'arte nella cultura nell'economia dalla metà del Quattrocento ad oggi* (Lugano, 2008).

⁸⁹ Bernard Aikema, "Il famoso Abondio': Abbondio Stazio e la decorazione a stucco nei palazzi veneziani circa 1685–1750," *Saggi e Memorie di Storia dell'Arte* 21, 1997 (1998), 85–122.

⁹⁰ Signed and dated 1718. C. Mazza, *I Sagredo: committenti e collezionisti d'arte nella Venezia del Sei e Settecento* (Venice, 2004). See also Favilla, Pedrocco, and Rugolo, *Venezia Barocca*, pp. 232–39, for the stunning pictures.



Figure 22.10. Abbondio Stazio and Carpofofo Mazzetti Tencalla, *Ornamental detail with animal*, 1718. Palazzo Sagredo, mezzanine.

ceremonies and festivities, or receptions of foreign officials, such as the arrival in 1707 of the British ambassador, Lord Manchester, painted by Luca Carlevarijs.⁹¹ In Carlevarijs's view, the Piazzetta, the city's official entrance, and the Ducal Palace provide the picturesque backdrop to the scene. The waving outlines of sails of various types of ships and boats that allude to the bustle of maritime activities break the openness of the sky. In age, Carlevarijs formed part of the same generation as Bambini, Lazzarini, Dorigny, Ricci, and Brustolon. A previous work of his, executed six years earlier, that immortalizes the entrance of the French envoy Cardinal César d'Estrées, has often been taken as the start of a new genre introduced in Venice: the cityscape or *veduta*.⁹² It was actually a restart. Tellingly enough, the genre hardly occurred in Venice in the 1600s. Recognizable outdoor urban settings staging official ceremonies had come to fruition around the same time elsewhere in Italy as well. It would now become a field in which Venetians excelled, with Canaletto, perhaps Carlevarijs's pupil but soon to become his great rival, with Guardi in a very different manner, and with Bellotto primarily abroad, poised to excel in it.⁹³

At the beginning of his career, Canaletto could boast various state and local commissions, but later on he catered more to foreigners who made short and longer term visits to the islands of the lagoon. He took a similar panoramic viewpoint as Carlevarijs when he fixed in paint the arrival of the politically important and influential diplomat of the Viennese court, Count Giuseppe Bolagnos, in 1729.⁹⁴ The whole urban environment has been rendered with great topographical correctness and put to the canvas with clear, smooth brushstrokes in bright and vibrant colors; here as well, no toning down in splendor. Possessing Lombardy since the Spanish wars of succession in 1714, the Austrian Empire followed keenly its neighbors

⁹¹ Birmingham, City Art Gallery; another version is in the Netherlands in the Collectie Instituut Nederland; Also Rizzi, *Luca Carlevarijs* (Venice, 1980); Exh. cat. (Padua 1994), *Luca Carlevarijs e la veduta veneziana del Settecento*, ed. Isabella Reale (Milan, 1994).

⁹² See the essay on the history of the Venetian *veduta* Aikema in Exh. cat. (Amsterdam, 1990), *Painters of Venice. The Story of the Venetian 'veduta'*, ed. Bernard Aikema and Boudewijn Bakker (The Hague, 1990), pp. 19–82.

⁹³ W. G. Constable and J. G. Links, *Canaletto. Giovanni Antonio Canal 1697–1768*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1989), no. 199; Alessandro Brogi, *Canaletto e la veduta* (Florence, 2007); Exh. cat. (Treviso, 2008–09), *Canaletto. Venezia e i suoi splendori*, ed. Giuseppe Pavanello and Alberto Craievich (Venice, 2008); Exh. cat. (London/Washington, 2010–11), *Venice. Canaletto and his Rivals*, ed. Charles Beddington (London/Washington, 2010). See also the latest Exh. cat. (Paris 2012), *Canaletto-Guardi. Les deux maîtres de Venise*, ed. Anna Bozena Kowalczyk (Brussels, 2012).

⁹⁴ Constable and Links, *Canaletto*, no. 355 and related 356.

and attempted to impose its foreign policy on them. So Venice kept up its appearances. Within this context it is not irrelevant to mention that high-standing guests, like Bolagnos, were usually accommodated in the private palaces of distinguished families.

In his grand views, whether painted, drawn, or engraved, Canaletto often included what seem snapshots of a specific, actual moment in time, like the act of repaving St. Mark's square, the scaffolding of the cupola of the Salute, or the hoisting up of a platform along the campanile of San Marco (Fig. 22.11). They were in all likelihood not inserted casually so as to enliven the scene and give it *couleur local*. These particular details may have been of specific interest to the actual commissioner of the painting. The most convincing example in this respect forms the so-called *Stonemasons Yard* of the National Gallery in London. The name of the commissioner is not handed down to us. Nevertheless, the prominence of the stonemason's workplace in the square in front of the Church of San Vidal makes one suspect that it cannot have been of particular interest to a foreigner.⁹⁵ The background features the Church of Santa Maria della Carità, now the Accademia, on the other side of the Grand Canal. A lovely impression of life in the street at any given moment is obtained when one focuses on the parts where all kind of people of different social backgrounds animate Canaletto's streets and squares while in the midst of ordinary, quotidian activities: the hanging of laundry, the unloading of a boat, a chat between senators, or a stroll along the Riva degli Schiavoni. The immediacy of these observations is striking.

A good deal of Canaletto's work can be qualified as "run of the mill" when he catered to the average pre-tourists who liked to bring back home visible records of the places to which they had traveled. The wars of the Austrian succession (1740–48) in which practically all the powers of Europe were involved, contributed noticeably to the decline in tourism in Venice. Therefore, the artist cannot be blamed for producing works for a potential circle of anonymous customers. When he worked on specific commissions, however, like those conceived in England where he worked intermittently in the years after 1746, the painter demonstrates how brilliantly he mastered his trade.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, with a style becoming more mechanical over the years, he was not assured of constant acclaim, and he

⁹⁵ Exh. cat. (London/Washington, 2010–11).

⁹⁶ Charles Beddington, *Canaletto in England: A Venetian Artist Abroad, 1746–1755* (New Haven, 2006); Francis Vivian, *The Consul Smith Collection: Masterpieces of Italian drawing from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (Munich, 1989).



Figure 22.11. Antonio Canaletto, called Canaletto, *View of the Grand Canal towards the Rialto Bridge*, 1723–1724, Venice, Ca' Rezzonico.

settled again for good in his home country some nine years later. Canaletto's genre had been exported by his nephew, Bernardo Bellotto, to Germany and Poland, where he had enjoyed his greatest successes.⁹⁷ He gave to his uncle's style and visual formula his own twist with his cool, more "northern" light.

Visitors were at times disappointed by their first impression of Venice, conditioned as they were by the works of Canaletto. Where the withering of a Gothic palace adds to the pictorial effect of a painting, in reality it may be perceived as just what it is. It was exactly this suggestive, melancholic atmosphere of decay that Francesco Guardi evoked with his portrayals of the city and its lagoon. He worked at first in the manner of Canaletto in terms of topographical correctness. His later views became the expression of quite a different sensibility. The patina of the past conveyed by old and crumbling buildings or overgrown ruins obtained a charm. And if depicting a humid summer day when solid shapes and outlines, so typical of Canaletto's style, seem on the point of dissolution, an even stronger feel for Venice's unique picturesque characteristics elicited by the omnipresent water can be had. The hues of pastel colored greyish-green tones and sketchy, evanescent patches of paint mark his style in these works.⁹⁸

Not before c. 1750, when Francesco Guardi was already 38 years old, did he emerge as a distinct personality, independent from the workshop of his elder brother Giannantonio.⁹⁹ He ventured into quite different subject matters than his brother had produced. He experimented, so it seems, with genre interiors, but set, as we will see, in the newly popular idiom of Pietro Longhi, who already enjoyed enormous success in this category of subject matter.¹⁰⁰ Like Canaletto, Guardi also painted so-called *capricci*, views in which the factual was suggestively fused with the fanciful (Fig. 22.12).¹⁰¹ These again were often elaborations of works created by Marco

⁹⁷ Stefan Kozakiewicz, *Bernardo Bellotto genannt Canaletto*, 2 vols (Recklinghausen, 1972); Exh. cat. (Conegliano 2010–11), *Bernardo Bellotto: Il Canaletto delle corti europee*, ed. Dario Succi (Venice, 2012).

⁹⁸ Antonio Morassi, *Guardi. Antonio e Francesco Guardi* (Venice, 1973); Dario Succi, *Francesco Guardi. Itinerario dell'avventura artistica* (Cinisello Balsamo, 1993); and Alessandro Bettagno, ed., *I Guardi. Vedute, capricci, disegni e quadri turcheschi* (Venice, 2002).

⁹⁹ Filippo Pedrocchi, *Antonio Guardi* (Milan, 1992).

¹⁰⁰ Filippo Pedrocchi, "Francesco Guardi e Pietro Longhi," in *I Guardi* (Venice, 2002), pp. 125–31.

¹⁰¹ Exh. cat. (Gorizia, 1988), *Capricci veneziani del Settecento*, ed. Dario Succi (Turin, 1988).

Ricci.¹⁰² With Canaletto in England and no other rivals in his immediate vicinity,¹⁰³ he may well have found his real vocation in painting topographically exact *vedute*, for which he rapidly created his own niche, developing that typical painterly style of his in the employment of a loose brush technique.¹⁰⁴ He exemplified with great effect views of Venice and its islands without recourse to sophisticated perspectival systems.¹⁰⁵

A whole different kind of souvenir which the well-educated grand tourist or English collector liked to possess were Italianate pastoral landscapes that kindled general memories of a trip across the Mediterranean world. The Tuscan Francesco Zuccarelli met with instant success in Venice with the advancement of bucolic scenes of an idyllic Arcadian nature inserted into imaginary landscapes.¹⁰⁶ In this he followed the French trend of Boucher. In general, however, in the 1600s and 1700s, the city of the lagoon did not particularly stand out in landscape.

A New Spirit

Taste for large and exciting works that amaze or a penchant for little intimate and sentimental pictures can be considered the polar points of the artistic sensibility that ran through the 18th century. While the cultural climate was changing, different genres and iconographies had gained more ground at the expense of the traditional popularity of historical and allegorical painting. The world of Ricci, Piazzetta, and Tiepolo that was continued in the works of their many pupils grew slowly out of date. It should be explicitly noted, however, that it fizzled out well before the fall of the Republic in 1797. The later age inclined towards standards of realistic nature and of truth: qualities of imagination so characteristic of the grand manner were no longer the well-respected norm. Nor was the need for ancestral and self-glorification, for display and for representation, felt as an absolute requirement in the fashioning of their self-image; rather, patrician families in the second half of the 18th century started to stress virtues of a completely different nature. This can be seen in the works of

¹⁰² Exh. cat. (Belluno, 1993), *Marco Ricci e il paesaggio veneto del Settecento*, ed. Dario Succi and Annalia Delneri (Milan, 1993).

¹⁰³ Michele Marieschi had already died in 1743.

¹⁰⁴ Denis Mahon, "When did Francesco Guardi become a 'vedutista'?" *The Burlington Magazine* 110 (1968), 69–73, had raised as the first the question when Guardi had started specializing in *vedute*.

¹⁰⁵ Exh. cat. (Venice, 2012), *Francesco Guardi 1712–1793*, ed. Filippo Pedrocchi and Alberto Craievich (Milan, 2012).

¹⁰⁶ Federica Spadotto, *Francesco Zuccarelli* (Milan, 2007).



Figure 22.12. Francesco Guardi, *Capriccio with Venetian Motifs*, 1760s, Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio.

Pietro Longhi, who introduced a new kind of family and group portrait into Venetian art. A comparison between specific works of father and son is illustrative in this.

The portrait of the Pisani family on view in the Accademia and executed in 1758 by Alessandro Longhi shows three generations of the Pisani family depicted on a huge canvas that measures 255 × 341 centimeters. All members look out at us, even the little children. They are surrounded by allegorical figures in the background. The distinction between the allegorical and the real—albeit idealized—figures has been expressed by a differentiation in style and color. The work, exceptional for its time period at least in Venice and in style continuing the late Baroque, shows a striking resemblance typologically with Veronese's portrait of the Cucina family presented to Mary and the Christ child by personifications of virtue.¹⁰⁷ The Pisani may have had this 16th-century work in mind when they gave Alessandro the commission. Alessandro's painting is fully in line with Tiepolo's stunning ceiling fresco extolling allegorically the Pisani family in the ballroom of their sumptuous and newly built villa in Stra on the Riviera del Brenta, painted some four years later.¹⁰⁸ This villa is visible in the background of Alessandro's work.

Juxtaposition with a hitherto unidentified family portrait of Pietro's hand exhibited in the Ca' Rezzonico shows a world of difference. Probably painted only a few years earlier, here too three generations posed for the artist. The modest size (61 × 50 cm) contributes to the intimacy of the scene. Siblings with their children and parents are seated comfortably together in what looks like an informal room of their *palazzo*. Very remarkably, attention is focused on the females in this group, who all look directly at the viewer, whereas the men play a subordinate role in the composition. A greater contrast with the portrait of the Pisani family is not imaginable. Success in society is not being expressed in Pietro's work; it rather showcases family togetherness in union and harmony and, very importantly, it flaunts offspring.

Pietro Longhi received his first training from his father, worked without much success under the history painter Antonio Balestra, and ultimately found his calling thanks to his apprenticeship in Bologna with the genre painter Giuseppe Maria Crespi. This was the same painter who deeply influenced Piazzetta, whom he had had as his pupil 20 years earlier.

¹⁰⁷ Dresden, Gemäldegalerie, 1571, 167 × 414 cm.

¹⁰⁸ Tiepolo's apotheosis was painted four years later, in 1761–62.

Upon his return to Venice, Longhi had first produced pastoral and religious scenes, but he had to compete in this with Piazzetta and his school. Beginning in the late thirties, he cleverly specialized in the type of painting from which he would derive his fame: the interior.¹⁰⁹

It is not always obvious, when we see a family depicted in Longhi's small- or medium-scale canvases, whether we are dealing with a painting that can be simply labeled as a portrait. For instance, the scene showing a man clad in a bright orange-red coat holding a little boy elegantly by the hand while bystanders watch (property of the Banca Ambrosiana in Vicenza) has an ambiguous character. On the back wall of the room, a portrait of a doge dominates, with a clearly legible text that identifies him as the well-known 16th-century Sebastiano Venier. Hence, one could assume that it is simply a portrait of the family Venier. But if so, then the painter would have immortalized the family in a very unusual and unconventional way, and at a highly unexpected moment in the middle of an action. In many other works, an indirect allusion to a specific family has been left out. We see how a household enjoys a cup of coffee or hot chocolate, or we seem to witness a dance lesson or a tailor's visit, a lady at her toilet, or a girl tickling a young man while asleep, rendered almost like snapshots. The sitters appear to be amusingly aware of being looked at. If the painting always hung in the same *palazzo*, one can deduce that it is likely representing the family that owned the palace, as is the case with Longhi's painting for *Palazzo Albrizzi*. Upon verification, the family of Giovanni Battista Albrizzi counted indeed five children at that time.

Most of the sitters in this kind of depiction do not show particular or clear individual traits. Stiff in their poses, they all too often seem doll-like, for which reason Pietro Longhi at times has been considered a mediocre painter. When we look at his individual portraits, however, we see how the artist is absolutely capable of clever characterizations and convincing resemblances. The question suggests itself whether Longhi deliberately avoided emphasis on likeness. He preferably wanted to portray the domestic doings of an aristocratic family, so that patricians, as it were, looked at images of their own private life, which well explains their popularity. In principle, any Venetian patrician family could identify with the scene

¹⁰⁹ Terisio Pignatti, *Pietro Longhi* (Milan, 1968); Pignatti, *L'opera completa di Pietro Longhi* (Milan, 1974); Exh. cat. (Venice, 1993), *Pietro Longhi*, ed. Adriano Mariuz, Giuseppe Pavanello, and Giandomenico Romanelli (Milan, 1993); Exh. cat. (Venice, 1995), *Pietro Longhi, Gabriel Bella: scene di vita veneziana*, ed. Giorgio Busetto (Milan, 1995).

even if it was related to a specific family.¹¹⁰ Pietro Longhi was practically the only Venetian painter whom local painters kept for themselves, to such an extent that one could even speak of a true native-Venetian taste.

The delight in humanity, the every-day, in the topical and the trivial illustrate the new sensibility of the age. In this sense, Longhi's paintings ran parallel to the rise of the comedy, of memoirs, of gossip and of newspapers, and the introduction of the so-called "conversation" pieces elsewhere in Europe. The playwright Gasparo Gozzi did not hesitate to equate Pietro Longhi's imitations of real life with Tiepolo's imagination.¹¹¹ And Goldoni, who broke away from the *Commedia dell'Arte* tradition, praised the painter for being "*verosimile*," or verosimilar, which can best be translated as having "the appearance of being real." Longhi was admired exactly for this quality: To the standards of his time, he was a "realistic" painter because he depicted what he saw. In these visual testimonials of contemporary life, illusionist effect and allegorical allusions were eschewed and the iconography of historical, biblical, or mythological nature was avoided; even psychological depth was omitted (Fig. 22.13).

Acclaimed as a figurative chronicler of the daily habits, customs, and private entertainments of the Venetian nobility and middle class, we can only guess how realistic and truthful these informal "portrayals" of Longhi were. The 18th-century chronicler Pietro Gradenigo characterized Longhi as a painter who excelled in "natural attitudes and caricatures that are strikingly similar."¹¹² If we bear in mind that the Italian word *caricatura* refers to real-life people, then this quote implies that ridicule or some sort of comical mock, however scant, must have formed an ingredient in his work.¹¹³ Yet another aspect becomes apparent in Alessandro's biography of his father. Alessandro emphasized that his father had "a brilliant and bizarre mind that specialized in painting civil pastimes and social gatherings (*riduzioni*) interlaced with love games and jealousies so true to

¹¹⁰ Philip L. Sohm, Pietro Longhi, and Carlo Goldoni, "Relations Between Painting and Theater," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 45 (1982), 256–73; Rolf Bagemihl, "Pietro Longhi and Venetian Life," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 23 (1988), 233–47; Dulcia Meijers, *De gouden schemer van Venetië. Een portret van de Venetiaanse adel in de achttiende eeuw* (The Hague, 1991), pp. 124–32; and Werner Busch, *Das sentimentalische Bild. Die Krise der Kunst im 18. Jahrhundert und die Geburt der Moderne* (Munich, 1993), pp. 294–308.

¹¹¹ In the *Gazetta Veneta*, No. 55, 13 Agosto 1760, mentioned by Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, p. 323.

¹¹² Gradenigo 1760, published in Lina Livan, *Notizie d'arte tratte dai notatori e dagli annali del N.H. Pietro Gradenigo* (Venice, 1942), p. 62.

¹¹³ Definitely not comparable to the biting satire of his English contemporary Hogarth.



Figure 22.13. Pietro Longhi, *The Lion's Stall*, 1762, Venice, Fondazione Querini Stampalia.

reality that his scenes caused a stir." Alessandro also tellingly mentioned that his father was capable of depicting masked figures so strikingly that they were recognizable, notwithstanding the disguise.¹¹⁴ The masked galantries depicted, for instance, in Longhi's *Ridotto Pubblico*, the official gambling house and precursor of the modern casino, in his *bottega del caffè*, or in his street scenes depicting specific events must have been immensely amusing to Venetians because of the "inside jokes" that could be understood only by the locals. Longhi's social observations present themselves as a gentle form of digestible social criticism meant to entertain; of humorous self-criticism, even if seen from the perspective of those who paid for them.

Giandomenico Tiepolo portrayed scenes from contemporary life in a completely different way.¹¹⁵ Tiepolo, who had collaborated with his father for years, gradually but steadily, and probably supported in this by his father, acquired his own personal style. He could differ from his father in the choice of subject matter, as in the guest lodge of the Villa Valmarana near Vicenza, where he depicted scenes from rural life while his father was working on stories from Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, and Tasso in the main building. Here again, as is the case with Longhi, only by the standards of his time can these pleasant peasant scenes be dubbed "realistic." In his later years he concentrated on the escapades of Pulcinella, a character from the *Commedia dell'Arte*, who forms a plebeian counter-figure to the heroes of his father, ridiculing all manner of conventions.¹¹⁶

Another most remarkable work at the end of his career forms *Il Mondo Novo*, signed and dated 1791 and conceived to decorate the walls of the artist's own Villa Zianigo in Mirano (Fig. 22.14). This frieze-form fresco shows a crowd of mixed people, Pulcinella included, that has gathered around an edifice, the magic lantern, to catch a glimpse of the cosmorama displayed inside of it.¹¹⁷ Goldoni had already treated this theme before him, as had Pietro Longhi. But in Tiepolo's version, interestingly, practically the whole

¹¹⁴ Alessandro Longhi, *Compendio delle vite de' pittori veneziani istorici più rinomati del presente secolo con suoi ritratti tratti dal naturale* (Venice, 1762), pp. 31–32.

¹¹⁵ See in general, Adriano Mariuz, *Giandomenico Tiepolo* (Venice, 1971); and Adriano Mariuz, *Tiepolo* (Verona, 2008).

¹¹⁶ Whistler in Exh. cat. (London/Washington, 1994–95), *The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Jane Martineau (New Haven, 1994), 329–59; Mariuz and Pedrocco, *Giandomenico Tiepolo*; Exh. cat. (Venice, 2004), *Tiepolo. Ironia e comico*, ed. Adriano Mariuz and Giuseppe Pavanello (Venice, 2004).

¹¹⁷ The first who used the term *il Mondo Nuovo* for cosmoramas was Goldoni in his play *I Rusteghi*. See also Darius A. Spieth, "Giandomenico Tiepolo's *Il Mondo Nuovo*: Peep Shows and the Politics of Nostalgia," *The Art Bulletin* (September, 2010), 188–210. In 1906, when



Figure 22.14. Giandomenico Tiepolo, *Il Mondo Novo*, 1791. Venice, Ca' Rezzonico.

audience is seen from the back, except for two characters depicted in profile. Those two are presumably Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo. All the others figure as anti-portraits.

Tiepolo had no clientele in these later years. This may have been a deliberate choice. His *Pulcinella* and *Mondo Novo* seem to express, respectively, mockery for what is and regret for what has past. The new neo-classical style had by now replaced the world of his father, which had also been his in every respect. Piranesi, with his fantasy architecture and ruins, and Canova's physically idealized and emotionally detached figures, emit a completely different taste and spirit that heralded from the last decades of the century and had made inroads everywhere in Europe.¹¹⁸ There was no point of return since the French Revolution of 1789. It was felt in the works of this last representative of the old world.

Epilogue

After Domenico's *Mondo Novo*, the Republic had six more years of life left. A specific line written in a letter to the last Venetian ambassador in Paris on 22 February 1797, with the carnival season in full swing, illustrates the atmosphere of the last days: "there was almost nothing unpleasant, and everything proceeded joyously."¹¹⁹ In the last meeting of the Great Council on 12 May 1797, the last doge, Ludovico Manin, was forced to proclaim its own abrogation. It was ultimately Napoleon who ended the swan-song of the Most Serene Republic, while followers of the Jacobins—of course without wigs!—danced around the tree of liberty raised in Piazza San Marco.

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the fresco was detached from its walls and remounted in a room of the Ca Rezzonico, it had been given its title.

¹¹⁸ See, for the neoclassical spirit in Venetian art, Exh. cat. (Venice, 1983–84), *Venezia nell'Ottocento: immagini e mito*, ed. Giandomenico Romanelli and Giuseppe Pavanello (Milan, 1983).

¹¹⁹ Letter of Lippomano to A. Querini, published in Mariuz, *Tiepolo*, p. 109.

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MUSIC IN VENICE: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Jonathan Glixon

The great Italian musicologist Nino Pirrotta wrote that Renaissance Venice “was perhaps the most musical of cities in the most musical period of our history.” The way in which scholars have approached Renaissance music in Venice until the second half of the 20th century, however, has been quite limited, conditioned by the models established by the first two monumental works of research in the field: Carl von Winterfeld’s *Johannes Gabrieli und sein Zeitalter* (Berlin, 1834) and Francesco Caffi’s *Storia della Musica Sacra nella già cappella ducale di San Marco in Venezia dal 1318 al 1797* (Venice, 1854). In this long-lasting picture, music and musicians worthy of study first appear in Venice in the 16th century, particularly with the arrival of Adrian Willaert as *maestro di cappella* in 1527. The ducal chapel (in the sense of a musical establishment) of San Marco was the central (and almost exclusive) location for sacred music, and Renaissance Venice’s major contribution to European musical culture as a whole can be found in a particularly Venetian style of church music cultivated at San Marco at the end of the 16th century, most especially in the works of Giovanni Gabrieli, organist at San Marco and prolific composer of both instrumental and vocal works for the Church.

Music at San Marco

The works by Caffi and von Winterfeld established two overlapping paths of scholarship: historical and biographical studies of the musical establishment of San Marco and its *maestri* and organists, on the one hand, and the development of the Venetian style of church music on the other. While von Winterfeld does present a brief history of the *cappella* and discusses the life and times of Giovanni Gabrieli, his attention is clearly on the rise of a musical style that he views as one of the principal foundations for the development of later (particularly German) styles. Gabrieli’s works, drawing from the models of Willaert and of composers such as Orlando di Lasso, break away, in this picture, from the prevailing contrapuntal style of Renaissance sacred music and employ, instead, a technique relying more on chordal harmony, with careful attention to the rhythm of the text, very

often in two or more choirs, the technique known as *cori spezzati*. Caffi, in contrast, is concerned exclusively with demonstrating the lost musical glories of the doge's chapel by presenting an accurate history of the development of the choir and instrumental ensemble and of the construction and use of the two organs in the church. With the exception of the organs, Caffi's view is that the chapel was not fully constituted until the appointment of the first *maestro di cappella* in 1490 (Piero de Fossis), and even then was in a primitive state until the appointment of the great Willaert in 1527. A large part of the book consists of biographies of the main *maestri* and organists. While most of those for the 16th century are very brief, four figures dominate, as they would continue to do for at least a century: the middle third of the century, 1527–62, is the age of Willaert, succeeded by the noted theorist (and disciple of his predecessor) Gioseffo Zarlino. The end of the century is, for Caffi, the age of Giovanni Gabrieli (organist at San Marco from 1583 to his death in 1612) and his uncle Andrea (organist 1566–86). The focus is clearly on these “great men,” whose biographies are many times longer than those of all the other figures.

The nationalistic aspects of the two early books (praising the lost glories of Venice, on the one hand, and seeking the origins of German styles, on the other), re-emerge in the two earliest 20th-century writings. Giacomo Benvenuti, in a book published in 1931 with the blessing of Mussolini, strove to accomplish two goals: on the one hand, to correct and expand Caffi's treatment of San Marco in the 16th century through thorough documentation, and, on the other, to demonstrate, through a multi-level approach, that the Venetian school of composition, of both sacred and instrumental music, owed little to the Flemish school embodied by Willaert but was, rather, a truly Italian accomplishment. Benvenuti presents accurately cited transcriptions of many of the documents regarding the appointment of *maestri di cappella*, organists, and instrumentalists for this period, something not done by Caffi, and is able to straighten out some of the confusion created by inaccuracies in the earlier work. This was an important step forward. To achieve his second purpose, Benvenuti discussed not only archival documentation but also the writings of Venetian theorists, and the contemporary publications of instrumental music, presenting also the first modern editions of a significant portion of the repertoire. Despite the polemical aspect, there is much of value in this study.

The other new work of the 1930s is much less polemical, although national pride was certainly an impetus for the research. The Belgian scholar René Lenaerts, in articles of 1935 and 1938, returned the focus to

his illustrious countryman Willaert, presenting new biographical information and, in the later study, the results, including document transcriptions, of a detailed study of the San Marco archives for the period of Willaert's tenure as *maestro*. He clearly hoped that this archival work, showing the *maestro's* role in establishing the international fame of the *cappella ducale*, combined with the study of Willaert's music made possible by the recent publication (1937) of the first volume of his collected works, would allow one to affirm that with this "grand maitre flamand," "we are dealing with a genius of exceptional stature, which only an unjustifiable oversight could deny a place alongside Josquin des Pres, Lassus and Philippe de Monte."

As the field of musicology expanded greatly after World War II, studies of music in Renaissance Venice proliferated. Much continued in the same vein as the earlier work, but new trends also developed. Not surprisingly, the *cappella* di San Marco and its major figures, Willaert and Gabrieli, still attracted much attention. The former remained primarily the domain of Belgian and German authors, with a further biographical article by Lenaerts, and finally, in 1985, a full-scale life and works by Ignace Bossuyt. At the same time, a complete edition of Willaert's music (that from the 1930s having been a false start) got underway (and is not yet quite complete). Willaert's sacred music was the subject of several studies by Hermann Beck, who also reaffirmed the centrality of Willaert and his disciple Cipriano de Rore to the development of the Venetian style. Giovanni Gabrieli also received great attention, with the publication of two full-scale biographical/musical studies. The 1967 study by Egon Kenton began as an expansion of Winterfeld's 1834 book, adding a more extensive biography, a detailed works list, and examination of Gabrieli's secular as well as sacred works. Denis Arnold, whose work played a key role in the broadening of research into Venetian music (see below), published his monograph on Gabrieli in 1980 (having issued a small-scale biography in 1974). This book offers a detailed biography of the organist-composer, documenting his employment not only at San Marco but also at one of Venice's great lay confraternities. It also addresses a wide variety of questions concerning the function of the musical works, their style and performance practice, and their chronology. Despite the book's contributions, it is often superficial and inaccurate, so that it cannot yet be considered the definitive treatment. Arnold also served as principal editor of the new edition of Gabrieli's works (1980). Richard Charteris, who has scoured libraries around the world for sources for the music of Gabrieli and other Venetian composers, issued a complete thematic catalogue of Gabrieli's works in 1996.

For the first time, individual members of the ducal chapel beyond Willaert and Giovanni Gabrieli now became the subjects of research. One of the most interesting developments was the appearance in the 1960s of works dedicated to two 15th-century composers and members of the *cappella*, during a period, long before the arrival of Willaert, that earlier research had either ignored or treated as not worthy of study. F. Antonio Gallo published in 1965 an edition of the works of the earliest known member of the *cappella*, Antonius Romanus, who served there from about 1420 until at least 1432, and composed, among other things, several motets for Venetian ceremonial occasions. Shortly afterwards appeared Giulio Cattin's 1967 study of a composer of the next generation, Johannes de Quadris, who served at San Marco from the 1430s until 1457 and whose biography was further enriched by the publication in 1989/90 by Lawrence Lüttekin of previously unknown documents from the Vatican archives. Musicologists also turned their attention to several prominent 16th-century San Marco musicians. David Bryant and Martin Morell addressed a serious gap with their studies of Giovanni Gabrieli's uncle and teacher, the organist and composer Andrea, with their publication in 1988 of a biography as the first volume of a collected edition. Another organist/composer, Claudio Merulo, who worked both in Parma and Venice, was the subject of a 1990 dissertation and several articles by Rebecca Edwards, as well as a volume of essays that appeared in 2006. The families of musicians who led the instrumental ensemble at San Marco in the late 16th century have also received considerable recent attention: the first chief instrumentalist, Girolamo dalla Casa, is the subject of a recent book by Colussi, Bryant, and Quaranta. The Bassano family, prominent in Venice and in England, where some traveled to serve Henry VIII, has been studied by Ongaro, Lasocki, and Ruffatti. The nationalistic impulses that spurred much of the early research on Venetian music were also responsible for the only study to this point of the life and works of an ordinary singer of the San Marco chapel, the Cretan musician Franghiskos Leontaritis, known in Venice as Francesco Londeriti, published in 1990 by Nikolaos Panayotakis.

The singers and later instrumentalists of the *cappella ducale* do play prominent roles, collectively, if not as individuals, in several studies that grew out of intensive research in the Venetian archives. The work begun by Caffi and continued by Benvenuti and Lenaerts was completed and corrected in the important 1986 dissertation by Giulio Ongaro on the chapel during the time of Willaert (along with significant material on the period from the 1480s until Willaert's arrival in 1527). Ongaro discusses in detail here, and in several subsequent articles, the development of the

chapel, its governance, the policies of hiring and firing musicians, and the role of the doge and procurators as patrons. In a 1988 article, Ongaro, through a careful examination of the documents, undermines two long-standing myths, that Doge Andrea Gritti played an unusually prominent role in hiring Willaert in 1527, and that this was part of an effort, parallel to that underway in other sectors of Venetian activities, to raise the level and status of the chapel. Ongaro demonstrates that the involvement of the doge was not at all unusual and that Willaert, after his arrival, made no significant changes to the chapel, which apparently was already well staffed with excellent singers, perfectly able to perform the works of the new *maestro*.

The ceremonial and liturgical practices of San Marco have attracted a considerable amount of attention. Earlier writers had asserted in general terms that the practices at the ducal basilica were unique and that they were employed to reaffirm the position and status of the doge and Republic of Venice. Not until the work of David Bryant, with his 1981 dissertation and several articles, was this topic explored in depth. Bryant demonstrated how particular aspects of the rich ceremonial and specific liturgies were employed in service of the “myth of Venice,” and he explored the possible relationships between extant compositions and annual or special ceremonies. The uniqueness of the liturgy itself was demonstrated in Giulio Cattin’s magisterial 1990–92 work *Musica e liturgia a San Marco*. Using recently rediscovered and fragmentary materials, Cattin reconstructed nearly the entire liturgy of San Marco, the so-called “patriarchino,” which, he demonstrated, although related, was not simply a derivation of that of Aquileia but fully fledged and independent. Cattin and his collaborators also reconstructed the system for procuring and creating liturgical manuscripts for San Marco and traced the continuing battle between the urge to preserve the ancient traditions and the pressure to Romanize and modernize both texts and music.

One aspect of musical practice at San Marco has long attracted attention by scholars, performers, and audiences: polychorality, most specifically, the idea that San Marco, with its unusual architecture that seemed to favor wide separation of performing forces, was the source for a technique that spread widely in Europe. Adrian Willaert had published in 1550 a collection of psalms for two choirs, in a technique labelled as *cori spezzati*, or divided choirs, and much of the music, both vocal and instrumental, by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli and other members of the late 16th-century Venetian school is for two or more ensembles. Combining this repertory with the Greek cross plan of San Marco, with its galleries

snaking along most of its circumference and the presence of two organ galleries on either side of the choir, led to performances both there and elsewhere with the multiple choirs spread around the church or other performing space. In the years since World War II, scholars have gradually dismantled various elements of this myth, although it remains part of popular lore, and performers continue to put it into action. Giovanni d'Alessi, in an article of 1952, showed, first, that the practice of *cori spezzati* was widespread in the Veneto before Willaert's publication, so that even if the technique was specifically required by Venetian ceremonial at all important events, it was not particular to Venice. As early as 1969, Wilton Mason explained that there was no evidence for any performances from the transepts, and David Bryant, in 1981, demolished some other aspects of the myth, separating, to some extent the two repertoires, the *cori spezzati* psalms of Willaert and the polychoral works of the Gabriellis and others. Through careful examination of the documents, he was able to determine that the psalms were never sung from the organ lofts and were, in fact, often sung with no physical separation at all, with all the singers in one of the large pulpits or together near the high altar. The polychoral works, in contrast, which usually involved organ, and often other instruments, did make use of the organ lofts, particularly for instrumentalists and perhaps vocal soloists, while the choir remained below. Most recently, the architectural historian Laura Moretti, in a 2004 article (explored again in Howard and Moretti 2009), showed that the psalms could also be sung from the choir galleries newly built by Jacopo Sansovino between 1536 and 1544.

Ceremonial Music and the Myth of Venice

Quite early on, the Venetian authorities recognized that elaborate music on special occasions was an effective way to display the power and magnificence of the city and its rulers. Dennis Stevens described a series of motets dedicated to doges in the 14th and 15th centuries, some of which could be connected to specific occasions such as coronations. Julie Cumming demonstrated that those works formed part of a broader Italian tradition of occasional motets. She argued that most of the composers of such motets for doges and other notable figures were not composed by Venetians, or even composers residing in Venice, but were, rather, from other cities ruled by the Republic, most notably Padua, which had an earlier tradition of polyphony than Venice itself. As Ellen Rosand wrote in

her notable article "Music in the Myth of Venice," by the 16th century the government had developed an effective system for using music (along with other elements of Venetian society and culture) to project the idea that the Republic was not only powerful but also was beloved by all its citizens. The musical establishment at San Marco under Willaert was now the equal of any in Europe, and annual and special processions, described in contemporary accounts, also boasted music performed by confraternities and others (see below). Iain Fenlon has studied the important role music at special ceremonial occasions in Venetian history, such as the funerals of doges and, most importantly, at celebrations following and later commemorating the victory over the Turks at Lepanto.

Sacred Music Outside of San Marco

San Marco was not, of course, the only venue in Renaissance Venice where sacred music was performed, although that would be difficult to determine through an examination of the musicological literature before the late 1950s. The San Marco monopoly was first broken in two important articles by Denis Arnold, who wrote about music at two of the great Venetian lay confraternities, known as *scuole grandi*: the Scuola Grande di San Rocco and the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista. The former employed as its organist, while he was also at San Marco, Giovanni Gabrieli, and both institutions hired, as Arnold's archival investigations showed, ensembles of singers (including several from the ducal chapel) and instrumentalists, for performance in both religious services at the *scuola* or its church, and in processions. While these articles provided a rather incomplete, and sometimes inaccurate, picture of the situation, they were vital steps forward in our understanding of the Venetian musical scene in the Renaissance. They were the starting point for my 1979 dissertation on music at all five of the *scuole grandi* active before 1540, for a series of articles exploring various aspects of their musical activities, and ultimately a book that broadened the picture to include the several hundred smaller confraternities known as *scuole piccole* (as well as extending the account through the fall of the Venetian Republic and the suppression of the confraternities in 1806). A new view began to emerge of a sacred musical landscape that, while still maintaining San Marco as its center, stretched from one end of the city to the other, with sophisticated, and sometimes elaborate musical performances at nearly every church in the city at least once a year. In the 1990s, Rodolfo Baroncini examined in

particular detail the documents regarding instrumentalists (including some of the earliest players of the violin) at the *scuole grandi*.

The situation outside of the confraternities is still not understood in detail. Andrea Chegai has examined musical activities at the cathedral of Venice, San Pietro di Castello (San Marco was not made the cathedral until the 19th century), and Jane Berdes looked at the beginnings of the musical traditions of the Venetian orphanages, the *ospedali*, which would become so famous in the 17th and, especially, 18th centuries. In the context of a study relating to early music printing in Venice, Bonnie Blackburn uncovered significant information regarding polyphonic musical performance at the Dominican convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. One of the most important studies in this area is *Oltre San Marco* by Elena Quaranta. Quaranta conducted a broad and comprehensive study of the musical activities of all Venetian religious institutions for brief periods of the Renaissance. For the most part, her focus was on types of documentation that could include a large number of institutions in a standard format, such as tax declarations for churches and monastic establishments, and charters of confraternities. In these documents, the institutions declared their standard procedures and expenditures, including music. This has made possible the establishment of a baseline of sorts for sacred musical activities in Venice, and as such is invaluable. At the same time, by discounting the constant variations in actual practice, brought about by changing financial and political situations and by the variable interests of the leaders of the varying institutions, as documented in the records of the events as they happened from year to year, the picture offered by Quaranta is somewhat misleading; as shown in my book on the confraternities, these institutions only rarely did exactly as indicated in their charters, more often either expanding or reducing the musical aspects of their observances.

One particularly interesting aspect of the Venetian sacred music world is the way the musical establishments of San Marco and the other churches and confraternities interacted. As Arnold and I showed, the *scuole grandi* (and *piccole*) often hired singers, organists, and instrumentalists whose regular jobs were at the ducal basilica. In fact, the procurators, the government officials in charge of the *cappella*, took advantage of this practice to save money on salaries, and the singers even formed a company to control this external employment, resulting in a complex legal situation. Ongaro showed how these relationships, and also those of the instrumentalists, developed into the 17th century, and how some musicians also enhanced their income through teaching.

This recent research on institutions other than San Marco has also debunked another widespread myth, that the musicians in the foreground of Gentile Bellini's famous painting of a procession in Piazza San Marco are those of the ducal chapel. As Howard Mayer Brown argued in a paper at the International Musicological Society conference of 1977, and I demonstrated in my 1979 dissertation, these are actually musicians of the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista. More recently, through a careful analysis of the painting and the documentary sources, Rodolfo Baroncini has persuasively argued that although the painting accurately depicts both the instrumental and vocal ensembles of the confraternity, Bellini has, in a break from his otherwise realistic depiction, placed together two groups that normally would have been performing at quite distant sections of the procession. In other words, the painting is not evidence of performance by combined vocal and instrumental ensembles but, rather, is an attempt to show all the principal participants of the procession within one frame. While musicians employed by the confraternities certainly sang repertoire similar to that regularly heard at San Marco, they also performed, as was the practice in confraternities elsewhere in Italy, a genre of non-liturgical religious song in the vernacular known as the *lauda*. The largest body of Venetian *lauda* texts is attributed to the 15th-century poet Leonardo Giustinian (brother of the first patriarch of Venice, Lorenzo Giustinian). An edition of these texts (including many whose attribution is very questionable), along with actual and reconstructed musical settings, appeared in Francesco Luisi's splendidly produced *Laudario Giustiniano*. A collection of 15th-century *laude* from the Veneto, perhaps Venice itself, is preserved in a manuscript now in Cape Town, South Africa, published in modern edition by Giulio Cattin. There is, however, only one collection of polyphonic *laude* that can be securely identified as Venetian (although where they were performed is unclear), that by fra Innocentius Dammonis, published by Petrucci as the first book of *laude* in 1508.

One of the most interesting new developments in the study of sacred music in Renaissance Venice has been the investigation of the spaces in which it was performed, the churches. When the observant Franciscans of San Francesco della Vigna rebuilt their church in the 16th century, music and acoustics were factors in the design, as explored in a 1990–91 thesis by Elena Marion. In this past decade there has been a great expansion of research in this area, spurred on by two architectural historians, Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti. Curious about the simultaneous development in Venice of new styles of sacred music (in particular polychorality) and new forms of church architecture (particularly in the designs of Jacopo

Sansovino and Andrea Palladio), they organized a conference in Venice in 2005 that brought together musicologists, architectural historians, and acousticians. Scholars examined such topics as the seating in the choir of San Giorgio Maggiore, the location of church organs, and spaces for music at the *ospedali*. The following year, in addition to a second conference to discuss the results of the first, Howard and Moretti arranged for experiments in which the choir of St. John's College, Cambridge performed Venetian repertory in a series of churches in Venice: San Marco; the monastic churches of San Michele in Isola and San Giorgio Maggiore; the conventual churches of the Frari, San Francesco della Vigna, and the Redentore; the parish churches of San Giacomo dell'Orio, San Martino, and San Giuliano; and the churches at two of the *ospedali*, the Ospedaleto and the Mendicanti; they also conducted a virtual analysis of the demolished church of the Incurabili, famous for its musical acoustics. These performances were analyzed both by audience surveys and by the most modern acoustical techniques. The results, accompanied by detailed and careful histories of the institutions, the churches, and their musical traditions, have just appeared in an important new study, *Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice*. While, as the authors admit, the results cannot be conclusive, since Renaissance performing situations cannot be completely reconstructed, this study sheds much light on the situation, and provides a much needed new perspective.

Instrumental Music and Instrument Manufacture

As mentioned above, San Marco and the other churches and religious institutions of Venice did not employ solely singers, but instrumentalists as well, most often (with the exception of the organ) for performances of separate instrumental works (only around 1600, and the beginnings of the Baroque, did instruments and voices regularly perform together). Once again, it was Gabrieli, with his instrumental ensemble *canzoni* and *sonate*, published in 1597 and 1612, that spurred the attention of musicologists, but earlier developments also received some attention. In addition to the monographs on Gabrieli's life and works discussed above, all of which devoted considerable attention to his instrumental works, Stefan Kunze, in 1963, dedicated an entire monograph to them, examining their musical structure and style, and the use of multiple "choirs" of instruments.

The origins of the "orchestra" of San Marco, and of the parallel ceremonial *piffari* of the doge, often depicted in images of ducal processions,

have only recently become clear. As late as 1974, when Eleanor Selfridge-Field published her book on instrumental music in Venice, there was not enough known about the earlier period to warrant more than a few vague paragraphs. That has now changed significantly. Giulio Ongaro traces instrumentalists at San Marco back to the early 16th century and presents in some detail the developments from 1568, when Girolamo dalla Casa da Udine headed up the first official ensemble. Rodolfo Baroncini has looked at the Renaissance history of the *piffari* of the doge, in particular the ensemble of Zorzi Trombetta and his band, which also included his sons. The issue of what instruments were actually used by these ensembles and others in Venetian ceremonial life is explored in detail by Linda Koldau and Jeffrey Kurtzman, in a carefully researched and profusely illustrated article that also puts Venetian practice into a broader Italian perspective. They clarify the sometimes vague terminology used by contemporary writers and determine, after much earlier speculation, the nature of the *trombe squarciate* often referred to, particularly in military contexts. The instrumentalists of the doge and San Marco were the backbone of the Venetian instrumentalists guild, which was founded sometime in the 15th century. Most of the early records are lost, but Gastone Vio has been able to reconstruct some of its early history. As he shows, the training of instrumentalists was very different from that of singers, who usually learned while serving as choirboys or novice monks. Instrumentalists, as Vio shows, operated much more like craftsmen, in which boys were apprenticed to masters, often their own fathers or uncles.

Renaissance Venice was a center not only for the performance of instrumental music but also for the manufacture of the instruments themselves. A fair number of examples manufactured in Venice in the 16th century survive in museums, and some of these have been the subject of organological investigations. Notable among these are studies of viols, a clavichord, and a lute. Other scholars have been investigating the makers themselves and the business of instrument making. Notable in this area is Giulio Ongaro, who has looked at builders of wind instruments, viols, and the immigrant Tieffenbrucker family of lute makers. More encyclopedic, if less rigorous, is the work of Stefano Toffolo, who has published a series of articles and books surveying the entire history of the instrument building industry in Venice, from the Renaissance through the end of the 18th century. Venetian organs have received considerable attention as well, and although no Renaissance instruments survive, documentation continues to surface as scholars research the activities of religious institutions. Two fundamental works are the books by Sandro dalla Libera and

Renato Lunelli. Dalla Libera attempts to trace the history of the organs in every Venetian church and describes those that survive, while Lunelli focuses on the builders (for the Renaissance, the names of Colombo and Colonna are most prominent). Gastone Vio has unearthed a considerable amount of documentation on the building of organs for various churches, and I have documented those of the confraternities. Most recently, Massimo Bisson has scoured the archives for information on the placement of organs in Venetian churches in the Renaissance and their not-infrequent relocation from one position to another.

Secular Vocal Music

While religious music and institutions are by far the best documented segment of the musical life of Renaissance Venice, there was, of course, a vast amount of secular music-making as well. Leonardo Giustinian, mentioned above in connection with the lauda, was one of the principal figures in the Italian tradition of poetry for music and was well known as a performer of his own songs. It is with the 16th century, however, that Venice's significance as a center for musical settings of Italian poetry emerges. The madrigal was probably born in Florence in the 1530s, but it was developments in Venice that helped to make the genre one of the most popular throughout Europe in the second half of the century. As Martha Feldman has demonstrated, in several articles and an important monograph, the Venetian literary circle around Pietro Bembo, particularly through the academy of Domenico Venier, played a vital role in bringing together musical techniques to turn the madrigal into the expressive vehicle that made it famous. The renewed interest in serious poetry, returning to the refinements of Petrarch, was accompanied by an effort, led by Adrian Willaert and his disciples, to find musical styles and techniques worthy of setting these sonnets and other poems. These composers became, in effect, interpreters of the poetry, with Willaert particularly interested in the sophisticated syntax, and his followers, most notably Cipriano de Rore, more concerned with the changing affects and images.

The madrigal was certainly the most elevated of secular Italian musical genres, but Venice also saw the cultivation of a number of lighter, more popular genres, sometimes in a theatrical context, including some with texts in more than one language. Music played an important role in Venetian theater in the late 16th century, even before the emergence of opera, as catalogued by Solerti in 1902 and discussed by Ivano Cavallini. A. William

Smith and Alessandro Pontremoli both use Marin Sanudo's diaries as major sources for examinations of the role of dance in Venetian theatrical spectacles in the early 16th century. While sacred music, except for nunneries and the orphanages, was a purely male affair, women played a vital role in secular vocal music, as authors of texts and as performers. Recent studies have shown that some of the Venetian courtesans were famous in their day as singers as well as poets.

Music Publishing

As discussed elsewhere in this volume, Venice was, by the late 15th century, one of Europe's chief centers of printing. While some liturgical books contained music printed from woodblocks, it was the arrival in the 1490s of Ottaviano Petrucci, from Fossombrone in the Marche, that enabled Venice to become the first and most important Renaissance producer of printed books of music. Petrucci obtained a privilege for his method of printing music from movable type in 1498, and issued his first book, *Harmonice musices Odhecaton A*, in 1501. This was followed by some 60 more titles in the next 20 years, published in Venice or in Fossombrone. Petrucci's name appeared often in early histories of music, but the first full-length study of the printer, by Anton Schmid, was published in Vienna in 1845. Schmid traced Petrucci's career and described those volumes he could locate (and included also a study of later 16th-century music printers, including the Venetians Scotto and Gardano, to be discussed below). Several decades later, in 1881, Augusto Vernarecci issued the first Italian book on Petrucci, correcting and updating Schmid and expanding greatly the discussion of Petrucci's civic activities in his home town after he left Venice. The 1940s saw two more important contributions to the literature on this first printer of music, an edition and study of the *Odhecaton* and a much more complete and accurate bibliography of Petrucci's output, although without detailed bibliographic information.

Modern bibliographic methodologies were brought to bear on the output of Petrucci with the work of Stanley Boorman, whose study of the first edition of the *Odhecaton*, showing that one of the extant copies in fact included elements of the second edition, appeared in 1977. In 1995, Bonnie Blackburn finally solved the vexed question of the identity of the man named in *Odhecaton* as its editor, Petrus Castellanus. She identified him as a friar at SS. Giovanni e Paolo, where he served as *maestro di cappella*, and she presents arguments regarding his activities and the

possible sources for the repertory he provided Petrucci for *Odhecaton* and successive publications. For the 500th anniversary of the publication of the *Odhecaton*, the Fondazione Levi in Venice organized a conference bringing together many significant musicologists and other specialists, the proceedings of which were subsequently published. Scholars discussed the cultural and publishing context in Venice, Petrucci's biography (in Venice and Fossombrone), his role as a printer (James Haar offers a fascinating overview of his position within the book publishing world, his relationships with other craftsmen and musicians, and the decisions he made that had consequences for the music printing business for the decades to come), on the repertory he issued, and on the distribution and reception of the books. As well as offering much that is new, this book illustrates the wide variety of methodologies now employed by scholars of Venetian Renaissance music: archival research, bibliographic and textual criticism, musical analysis, liturgical studies, and the like. The crowning achievement of research on this most important music printer is the 2006 catalogue raisonné by Stanley Boorman, where he brings together the fruits of decades of research. This is far more than a catalogue, offering as complete and detailed a biography as possible, with transcriptions of all relevant documents, an extraordinary account of Petrucci's working methods and materials, and invaluable discussions of the world of Venetian printing. The catalogue itself, which distinguishes editions never before recognized, is a model of modern bibliographic description and analysis.

Petrucci is not, of course, the only Venetian printer to have received the attention of musicologists. His successors, most notably Antonio Gardano and Girolamo Scotto, utilized, rather than Petrucci's multiple-impression process, the much quicker, although less elegant, single-impression technique. Their reasonably priced editions garnered extraordinary success, and both publishing houses produced a large number of very varied publications over an extended period of time. Mary S. Lewis authored the first of the great bibliographies of a Venetian music printer, with a path-breaking three-volume catalogue and study that describes the nearly 450 music books Gardano issued in Venice between 1538 and 1569. Antonio Gardano was succeeded by his sons, and their production (nearly 1000 editions) from 1569 through 1611, has been studied and catalogued by Richard Agee. Gardano's great rival, who did not hesitate to pirate some editions from his contemporary, was Girolamo Scotto, who issued about 400 books between 1539 and 1572 (in total, nearly half of all Renaissance music publications came off Venetian presses). Jane Bernstein's exemplary catalogue

also includes excellent discussions of various aspects of the music book business in Venice in the middle of the 16th century. Some lesser Venetian printers have also received scholarly attention: Andrea Antico and Claudio Merulo.

Scholars have also addressed topics not connected with specific printers, including privileges for printing music, contracts and financial arrangements, identification of the printers of unlabeled books, the relationships among the various Venetian music publishers, the relationships between printers and the book-buying public, and the printing of books of monophonic chant. One particular polyphonic print, Willaert's *Musica nova*, issued in 1559 by Gardano, has attracted considerable attention. In 1946, a year following his dissertation, Armen Carapetyan argued that this print, which unusually contains both motets and madrigals, was printed a year before the date on the title page and that the repertoire, at some point known by the name *La Peccorina*, after the courtesan who owned the manuscript collection before selling it to Duke Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara, was composed nearly two decades earlier. Edward Lowinsky argued for a lost edition of *La Pecorina* published in the late 1540s, containing a slightly earlier repertory. Twenty years after Carapetyan, Anthony Newcomb turned to the problem and constructed a modified chronology, based on some new documents and re-evaluation of others. He proposed that following an extended controversy in the Venetian courts because of the proposed publication by somebody else of some of the works, a private, now lost, edition appeared in 1558, perhaps in Ferrara, to be followed by the extant one a year later, and then, ten years after that, in a re-edition with the title *La Peccorina*. That same year, Helga Meier argued, on the basis of examination of the music, that, as Carapetyan had suggested, the music was early, but, notwithstanding, that the 1559 edition was the first. More recently, Jessie Ann Owens and Richard Agee have reassessed all the evidence and come to the conclusion that there was, after all, only one edition of *Musica nova*, published in late 1558, although dated 1559 (perhaps as a ruse to extend the life of the privilege).

Music Theory

Not surprisingly, given the intensity of the intellectual and musical life of Venice, there was considerable interest in music theory. Scholars have identified several manuscripts as having Venetian origins, including one with some early writing on text underlay, among other things.

The city was also home to some of the most important Renaissance music theorists, including Pietro Aron (for part of his life) and Gioseffo Zarlino. While all have been the subject of considerable musicological attention, there has been little effort to place them into a particularly Venetian context, with the notable exception of Aron's reliance on musical examples from Petrucci's prints and Zarlino's dependence on Willaert as the model for his ideas of excellence in musical composition (which appears throughout the literature) and text setting.

Music in Venetian Painting

With the ubiquity of music in the culture of Renaissance Venice, it is not surprising that musical images were prominent in the work of Venetian painters. As elsewhere, of course, musical angels appear frequently in 15th-century sacred paintings, but it is with the allegorical use of music in non-sacred works that the Venetian school stands out. Much of the discussion of these images is integrated into art historical studies of individual painters and their works (for instance, in David Rosand's book on Titian), but there is also a considerable amount of scholarship on the specific topic. One approach is to view the musicians and instruments in the paintings as referring to contemporary performance practice. For musicologists, these paintings can then be used as a source. Stefano Toffolo has surveyed Venetian painting as evidence of the usage and form of specific musical instruments. Anthony Rowland-Jones sees in the ensembles depicted in works by Bonifazio Veronese evidence for the varied practices of amateur musicians. Edward Lowinsky used the appearance of an enigmatic bit of musical notation in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, which he argues was intended for performance, as the starting point for an extended essay on the little-known genre it represents and its significance both in this painting and elsewhere. For art historians, the link between artistic depiction and actual practice provides a clue to the meaning of the painting, as it can be seen as referring to a specific set of activities that would have been recognized by a Venetian audience. Katherine Powers, for example, argues that the *lira da braccio* that appears in so many Venetian paintings of the madonna enthroned, by Bellini and others of his period, reflects the contemporary practice of singing laude (see above) to the accompaniment of just that instrument, and thus lets the viewer see his own activities reflected in those of the musical angels.

A much more widespread approach is to see music in an allegorical role, although there is little agreement about interpretation. Two groups of paintings have attracted particular attention: Giorgione's *Concert champetre* and similar works, and Titian's several canvases of Venus with a musician. For Augusto Gentili, the nude, recorder-playing woman and the clothed, lute-playing man embody the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy found in so much Venetian writing of the period. Similarly, Elizabeth Delmont sees the instruments in the Titian paintings, especially those in which Venus holds a recorder, as highlighting the contrast between the clothed, cultured, male playing the respectable organ or lute, and the nude, sensual, natural woman playing the erotically tinged wind instrument. Katherine McIver offers an alternative to the standard interpretations of the Titians as allegories of sight and sound, pointing to the tactile nature of musical performance and its role as an allegory of erotic touch. Anthony Rowland-Jones examines the depictions of recorders in Titian's works and notes the difference between the appearance of a single instrument, as in the Venus paintings, where the erotic meaning is clear, and the showing of two or more instruments, which he identifies as an allegory of harmony. On a rather different tack, Zdravko Blazekovic reads into depictions of the lira-playing Marsyas in paintings of the Croatian immigrant to Venice Andrea Schiavone an allegory of the Turkish threat to the *Serenissima*.

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CLOTHING, FASHION, DRESS, AND COSTUME IN VENICE (C.1450–1650)

Margaret F. Rosenthal

Introduction

Clothing evolved into a system of fashionable dress in early modern Venice because frequent changes in taste, novelty in designs, and innovative methods in the manufacturing of textiles were supported by an unprecedented institutional flexibility.¹ In addition, increased social mobility, a broader knowledge of distant customs and ways of dressing, and diversification in industrial manufacturing of textiles transformed how Venetians, regardless of social rank and wealth, could express themselves in clothing.²

Fashion and dress in this long period reflect the financial means, social status, ethnicity, and gender of the wearer and attest to how Venice thrived, despite a few dips in its economy in the period from 1630–60, as one of the strongest industrialized bases in Europe. Textiles were a very important commodity, involving a large segment of the Venetian population. The many foreign peoples who flourished in Venice took part in a thriving crafts industry which reflected the textiles, designs, dyes, and patterns from Asia, Europe, and North Africa. As historian Joanne Ferraro notes, upper-class Venetians' fashion aesthetics were made up of what

¹ Carlo Marco Belfanti, "The Civilization of Fashion: At the Origins of a Western Social Institution," *Journal of Social History* 43.2 (2000), 261–83; Liz Hodorowich, "The New Venice: Historians and Historiography in the 21st Century Lagoon," *History Compass* 2 (2004), 1–27; Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore/London, 2000), pp. 300–01; and Blake de Maria, *Becoming Venetian: Immigrants and the Arts in Early Modern Venice* (New Haven/London, 2010), pp. 33–49.

² See, by Patricia Allerston: "Consuming Problems: Worldly Goods in Renaissance Venice," in Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn S. Welch, eds., *The Material Renaissance: Costs and Consumption in Italy, 1400–1650* (Manchester/New York, 2007), pp. 11–46; "Meeting Demand Retailing Strategies in Early Modern Venice," in Bruno Blondé, et al., eds., *Retailers and Consumer Changes in Early Modern Europe: England, France, Italy and the Low Countries* (Tours, 2005), pp. 169–88; "L'abito usato," in Carlo Marco Belfanti and Fabio Giusberti, eds., *La moda* (Turin, 2003), pp. 561–81; "Reconstructing the Second-Hand Clothes Trade in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Venice," *Costume* 33 (1999), pp. 46–56; and "L'abito come articolo di scambio nella società dell'età moderna: Alcune implicazioni," in Anna Giulia Cavagna and Grazietta Butazzi, eds., *Le trame della moda* (Rome, 1995), pp. 111–24.

Venice had acquired over time as a seafaring empire, and through its colonies at Constantinople, Aleppo, Tripoli, Cairo, and Alexandria.³ These mercantile networks both at home and abroad bolstered the formation and continuation of business networks and material exchanges over many centuries.

New patterns of production, merchandizing, and consumption in the creation and dissemination of Venetian textiles for clothing also changed how Venetians selected and acquired goods to form their identities.⁴ As a hierarchical system, fashion and dress served as social markers for distinct social registers by adhering to specific colors and fabrics which announced the vocation, marital status (particularly for women), and gender and social echelon of the wearer. Much like a renaissance garment is made up of many distinct but interrelated parts that need to be assembled carefully and precisely in order to function as a whole, Venetian men and women over two centuries used textiles, designs, and trims to adorn and make their bodies legible to vastly different groups of people. Two published costume books, one by Cesare Vecellio in the 16th century and the massive, encyclopedic work of the 18th century by Giovanni Grevembroch, depict the dress codes and collective modes of socialization and representation of Venetian men and women. Venetian inventories also provide a view of the kinds of textiles owned by all social registers, as do dotal dowries housed in the Venetian state archives.⁵

Fashion throughout this long period refers to the act of transforming textiles into clothing in new ways, according to its cut and shape, and, moreover, its ability to introduce change in social and gender practices.⁶ Women up to and throughout the 18th century were spinners, weavers, embroiderers, mercers, petty retailers, hawkers, and laborers who were fustian weavers, tailors, doublet-makers, and perhaps designers.⁷ As Venetian households increasingly were linked to foreign urban markets, women

³ Joanne M. Ferraro, *Venice: History of the Floating City* (Oxford, 2012), p. 108.

⁴ Margaret F. Rosenthal, "Cultures of Clothing in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *JMEMS* 39.3 (Fall 2009), 459–81.

⁵ Ferraro, *Venice: History of the Floating City*, pp. 109, 110, 117, 219.

⁶ Christopher Breward, "Cultures, Identities, Histories: Fashioning a Cultural Approach to Dress," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture* 2.4 (1998), 301–13; Breward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester, 1995); Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil, eds., *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London/New York, 2010), pp. 3–14; Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 10–16; Ann R. Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 1–6.

⁷ Ferraro, *Venice: History of the Floating City*, p. 186.

were more and more producers of textiles for sale, particularly silk, in the 18th century, when most manufacturing shifted to the mainland state. They were involved in reeling, spinning, throwing, and boiling silk filament. In and around Brescia in northern Italy, they made silk thread and buttons and bleached and dyed fabrics such as linen.

A widening of the number and variety of crafts governed by the Venetian guilds along with a faster movement of goods in and out of the Venetian Republic influenced how Venetian merchants, diplomats, humanists, artists, mendicants, pilgrims, itinerant artisans, and laborers interacted with their city as a hub of trade, textile production, and mercantile entrepreneurship.⁸ Global networks involved newly widening commercial markets for individual consumption, from localized shops to international fairs and overseas depots.⁹

Fashion trends and technological innovations in the production of textiles increasingly brought makers and consumers together in a collaborative design process. This collaboration involved an expansive and varied social and trade network that included mercers, artisans, and tailors who designed clothing and responded swiftly to highly discerning private clients.¹⁰ From the late 15th through the 16th century, Italian tailors increasingly shaped garments to the body and were central to the process of dressing; they chose and collected textiles for their clients directly from merchants and mercers.¹¹ Tailors also introduced new styles with

⁸ For the conception of the unprecedented speed and movement of goods in this period, see John Jeffries Martin, "The Renaissance: A World in Motion," in Martin, *The Renaissance World* (London, 2007), pp. 8–11, 17–20, 23.

⁹ On the increasingly important role of early modern retailers, see John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993); Frank Trentmann and John Brewer, eds., *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges* (Oxford/New York, 2006); and for early modern retail networks, see Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400–1600* (New Haven/London, 2005), pp. 127–29, 191–93, 203–08, 240–41; Donatella Calabi, "Renewal of the Shop system: Italy in the Early Modern Period," in Blondé, et al., eds., *Buyers and Sellers: Retail Circuits and Practices in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 51–62; de Maria, *Becoming Venetian*, pp. 35–36; and Roberta Orsi Landini, "Da vanità a virtù: l'innovazione come valore aggiunto all'origine della produzione tessile per l'abbigliamento," in Eugenia Paulicelli, ed., *Moda e moderno* (Rome, 2006), pp. 69–70.

¹⁰ Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 102–03, 262, 296–97. Although Elizabeth Currie in "Fashion Networks: Consumer Demand and the Clothing Trade in Florence from the Mid-Sixteenth to Early Seventeenth Centuries," *JMEMS* 39.3 (Fall 2009), 483–509, examines the role of the tailor in relation to the Florentine context, many of her findings are applicable to Venice; Alessandra Mottola Molfini, *Il libro del sarto della Fondazione Querini-Stampalia di Venezia* (Venice, 1987).

¹¹ Currie, "Fashion Networks," pp. 496–502.

clearly formed gender differences and helped to shape and influence personal, aesthetic choices with new cuts and with combinations of colors, fabrics, and ornamentation. On account of a strong entrepreneurial spirit, tailors expanded their trade and responded energetically to competition from northern Europe by encouraging the production of locally made fabrics that were less expensive than those imported from other countries. Cheaper silks were adorned by specialist craftsmen whom tailors subcontracted to apply a wide range of haberdashery and ornaments onto a diverse range of fabrics.¹²

Despite the increased fluidity in clothing practices, the upper echelons of Venetian society made greater use of intricate textile weaves and innovative patterns than the lower social ranks. The Venetian nobility sought social differentiation through fashionable dress and elaborate spending because status, they came to realize, depended not only on luxurious cloth but also on how cloth was transformed into new styles of dress that also followed personalized guidelines.¹³

Fashion also prefigures social changes in manners and basic assumptions about Venetian society that were widely shared by large sections of the Venetian population. Clothing, for example, increasingly helped individuals of all social stations resolve debt issues.¹⁴ Formed as separate and discrete parts that circulated and recirculated after the death of a person, clothing was altered and realtered for individual family members and for individuals in larger networks that extended beyond the family.¹⁵ As an elaborate assemblage of sleeves, bodice, doublet, partlet, shirt, cape, undergown, and head covering, clothing could be sold in portions if the occasion arose. These detachable parts moved from person to person and served also as gifts, donations, and bequests.

Since fashion as a system extols the new and depends less on conservatism and tradition, clothing in early modern Venice no longer served the same purpose it had in the past for storing value, given the proliferation of cheaper lighter-weight textiles that imitated more expensive weaves, and

¹² Belfanti, "The Civilization of Fashion," p. 273; Orsi Landini, "Da vanità a virtù," p. 74; Currie, "Fashion Networks," pp. 498–500; and Catherine Richardson, *Clothing Culture, 1350–1650* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 15–17.

¹³ Carole Collier Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence: Families, Fortunes, and Fine Clothing* (Baltimore, 2002), pp. 5–6, 34, 72–74.

¹⁴ Horodowitz, "The New Venice," p. 4; Allerston, "Consuming Problems," pp. 11–46.

¹⁵ On the desire for the new in relation to clothing, see Eugenia Paulicelli, *Moda e Moderno: Dal Medioevo al Rinascimento* (Rome, 2006), pp. 7–8; and Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, pp. 1–5.

secondhand markets where clothes could be bought or rented.¹⁶ This did not mean that once clothing became more of a fashion system than a preserver of tradition it was no longer subject to ongoing political, economic, religious, and social changes and regulations. It did mean, though, that an increased visual familiarity with other cultures' fashions prompted the combining of textiles from different locations, imitating cuts and designs across European countries, and embellishing fabrics with ornamental flourishes that richly joined threads, trims, and jewels from many places around the world. Imported products were enjoyed both by the wealthy and the poor in ways not previously seen within northern Italy.

Costume and Costume Books

Early modern changes in fashionable dress were largely communicated through printed costume books and illustrated *alba amicorum*.¹⁷ Only Venice and Nuremberg from the late 16th century onwards were the

¹⁶ Allerston, "L'abito usato," pp. 561–81; "Reconstructing the Second-Hand Clothes Trade," pp. 46–56; "L'abito come articolo di scambio," pp. 111–24; and Laurence Fontaine, ed., *Alternative Exchanges: Second-hand Circulations from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (Oxford/New York, 2008).

¹⁷ On the genre of the illustrated *album amicorum*, see J. L. Nevinson, "Illustrations of Costume in the *Album Amicorum*," *Archaeologia*, 2nd ser., 106 (January 1979), 167–76; Margaret F. Rosenthal, "Fashion, Custom and Culture in Two Early-Modern Illustrated Albums," in Maurizio Rippa Bonati and Valeria Finucci, eds., *Mores Italiae: Costume and Life in the Renaissance* (Cittadella, 2007), pp. 79–107; Rosenthal, "Fashions of Friendship in an Early Modern Illustrated *Album Amicorum*," British Library, MS Egerton 1191, *JMEMS* 39.3 (Fall 2009), pp. 619–41; idem, pp. 52–74; Rippa Bonati and Finucci, eds., *Mores Italiae*; and Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern History* (Toronto, 2005), pp. 105–20. On both the costume book and the illustrated *album amicorum*, see Wilson, *The World in Venice*, pp. 70–132. On the costume book, see Rublack, *Dressing Up*, pp. 146–63; Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni: The Clothing of the Renaissance World* (London/New York, 2008); Jane Bridgeman, "The Origins of Dress History and Cesare Vecellio's 'pourtraits of attire,'" *Costume*, 44 (2010), pp. 37–49; Jeannine Guérin dalle Mese, *Il vestito e la sua immagine: Atti del convegno in omaggio a Cesare Vecellio nel quarto centenario della morte* (Belluno, 2002); Guérin dalle Mese, *L'Occhio di Cesare Vecellio: Abiti e costumi esotici nel '500* (Turin, 1998); Guérin dalle Mese, "Abiti di Cesare Vecellio: Venezia e 'il Veneto,'" in Cesare Vecellio and Tiziana Conte, *Cesare Vecellio 1521c.–1601* (Belluno, 2001), pp. 125–54; Liz Hodorowich, "Armchair Travelers and the Venetian Discovery of the New World," *Sixteenth Century Studies* 36.4 (2005), 1039–62; Ulrike Ilg, "The Cultural Significance of Costume Books in Sixteenth-Century Europe," in Catherine Richardson, ed., *Clothing Culture, 1350–1650* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 29–47; and Ann R. Jones, "'Worn in Venice and throughout Italy': The Impossible Present in Cesare Vecellio's Costume Books," *JMEMS* 39.3 (Fall 2009), pp. 483–509.

publishing centers of costume books.¹⁸ Beginning in the early 16th century, costume books printed in northern Europe acted as an identification system—a sort of Renaissance ethnography. In a largely pre-literate society, people were read by and learned to read the value of textiles and the cut of clothing as fixed signs of profession, wealth, social status, and geographical provenance that they often wanted to imitate.¹⁹

Costume book compilers and writers such as the 16th-century Venetian author and painter Cesare Vecellio commented in print on the “other” or the “exotic” by deciphering the language of clothing as the making of the human subject in relation to his or her geographical place and time.²⁰ And yet a person’s fashionable clothing in the early modern period was a complex patchwork of dress from multiple nations. Printed in Venice in 1590 and 1598, both of Vecellio’s volumes are accompanied by woodcuts provided by Christoph Chrieger, a German printmaker. Presenting 415 woodcuts paired with commentary in the 1590 volume and 503 in 1598, Vecellio offers information about nearby and faraway costume and custom surpassing any provided in the dozen costume books published before or after his.²¹ This pairing of image and text had a large influence on histories of dress that followed in the 17th and 18th centuries as, for example, the noted costume book of the Venetian, Giovanni Grevembroch, even though cracks in the hierarchical method of organizing dress had already become evident in Vecellio’s volumes.²²

Venetian printers who specialized in prints, mapmaking, and model books for lace making, for example lo Zoppino, Vavassori il Guadagnino, and Bindoni & Sessa, were the first to recognize this fervor to collect information about different cultures and regions via their “habits” or costumes. The term *costume book*, however, is a misnomer. Costume, as derived from the Latin word *consuetude*, implies the customary function or use of dress in multiple cultural contexts that precede the making of specific items of clothing. Like encyclopedias that organize knowledge into distinct and comprehensive categories, or atlases that chart Renaissance cartography’s efforts to map the entire world, costume books arrange people’s clothing according to rank, ethnicity, and gender and in accordance with

¹⁸ Rublack, *Dressing Up*, p. 161.

¹⁹ Wilson, *The World in Venice*, pp. 70–104.

²⁰ Wilson, *The World in Venice* pp. 72–74, 77–92, 104; Guérin dalle Mese, *L’Occhio di Cesare Vecellio*; Hodorowich, “Armchair Travelers,” pp. 1039–62; Ilg, “The Cultural Significance of Costume Books,” pp. 29–47.

²¹ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*.

²² Jones, “‘Worn in Venice,’” pp. 483–509.

prescriptive codes of conduct that regulate human behavior. According to these systems, “costume” signifies manners and behaviors or customs and styles of life in much the same way that “habit” or “abito” characterizes the “habit” or “dress” of a specific group of people.²³

Vecellio’s two books on clothing worn throughout the world are the product of an early modern Venetian artist and writer with a merchant’s eye for textiles, trims, and more. Nostalgic for earlier periods in Venetian dress when Venice was politically more stable and less influenced by outside forces, Vecellio is often critical about the swift-changing dress of his fellow Venetian citizens.²⁴ Profiting from a direct knowledge of the city as a mecca of trade, a center of publishing, and a meeting point between the East and the West, Vecellio brings to the reader a mine of information about material culture—art, textiles, and world trade systems. Indeed, his commentary on Venetian dress is unprecedented in the history of costume books prior to the 18th century for the sheer wealth of information regarding fabrics, weaves, dyes, cut, styling, and cultural customs.²⁵ While the notion of the costume book was to consolidate cultural ways of life and regional identity formation (even though fixed notions of place were continually being called into question), the reaction to the rapid print circulation of costume images among some costume book compilers was to try to reinforce rather than to break open strict dress codes or eradicate luxurious spending. Even Venetian legislation against luxury expenditures did not mean that the government was necessarily against luxurious objects in and of themselves. Rather, officials were opposed to useless spending that might ruin well-to-do families or reduce marriages and reproduction rates because families could not amass sufficiently large dowries to find acceptable husbands for their daughters. Indeed, sumptuary legislation was mostly concerned with social stability and preserving hierarchies.²⁶ Officials attempted, not always successfully, to control the use of fabrics, their colors, and their weaves and cuts not only in order to enforce equality among citizens, affirm gender prescriptions, and curtail excessive spending but also to protect precarious economies. Moreover, as a way to maintain and reinforce quickly eroding social barriers as

²³ Wilson, *The World in Venice*, p. 102.

²⁴ Guérin dalle Mese, *Il Vestito*, pp. 11–13.

²⁵ Bridgeman, “The Origins of Dress History,” pp. 43–44.

²⁶ Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, “Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good: Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” *JMEMS* 39.3 (Fall 2009), 600, 602–04.

communicated by new and quickly changing fashionable styles of dress, regulatory practices were supported by legislators and preachers. Their moral rationale stressed the need to utilize some of the resources of the rich for social measures regarding increased and out-of-control consumption. The political nature of the laws isolated fashion as the culprit and spoke to the need to maintain and signal political order on the local level. Ironically, this advertised rather than eliminated Venetians' desire for the great variety of materials and luxury goods in circulation such as buttons, fans, shoes, and more.²⁷

In the early modern period, luxury was an important factor in economic growth. Paradoxically, moralist and ecclesiastical criticisms of the uses of luxury sustained fashion rather than curtailed it. So, too, novelty no longer could be easily absorbed into traditions of dress. With the advent of fashion as a system of appearances, and with the parallel recognition that this phenomenon was eluding the control of political systems, sumptuary legislation in Venice inadvertently called attention to ways by which individuals could overcome social hierarchies. The fines (a kind of luxury tax) exacted upon transgressors actually redistributed the city's resources, while the perpetrators participated in an economic system designed to recycle their wealth into "the good of the city" and "in order to render the coexistence among unequals less unfair and more acceptable."²⁸

Increased social mobility, however, did not necessarily translate into the invention of new styles. Venetian merchants, university students, soldiers, and ambassadors continued, for the most part, to wear their cities' and regions' styles while traveling abroad. While there was great variation in fashions from place to place, Venetian dress tended to signify shared cultural belonging and collective identity rather than follow the whims of personal taste.²⁹ Changes in social rank and position still required a style of clothing declaring one's regional origin and profession. Vecellio recognized, however, that political changes affecting the elite—the takeover of the court of Naples by the Spanish, for example—did lead to the adoption of new styles.³⁰ But for most social ranks, the difficulty and expense of

²⁷ Muzzarelli, "Reconciling the Privilege of a Few," pp. 604–05.

²⁸ Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York, 1996), pp. 36–37, 90–1, 338; Rosenthal, "Cultures of Clothing," pp. 472–73.

²⁹ John Jeffries Martin, "The Myth of Renaissance Individualism," in Guido Ruggiero, ed., *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 211–14.

³⁰ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 298.

traveling gave traditional regional dress, as presented in printed costume books, a startling novelty rather than inspiring a desire to imitate them.

Vecellio's ethnographic approach to what people wear emphasizes how clothing becomes "dress" when it endures as a collection of manners, customs that are informed by prescribed codes of civility and social dictates, regional specificity, and gender. Dress is also a marker of regional and social differences. Groups of people with shared identities use dress to forge collective identities even though social, economic, and political inequalities work to divide them. Dress, or "habits," therefore, is the opposite of fashion because it affirms the persistence of social patterns and consolidates cultural ways of life, even though clothing can be transferred from subject to subject. Therefore, Vecellio still orders his prints and commentaries according to a social hierarchy—from the highest social status to the lowest. In Venice and the mainland state, he begins with the doge, his officials, and all noblemen and moves down the social scale to porters, galley slaves and beggars, and, in the case of women, from the doge's wife to noblewomen to housemaids and produce sellers in the city's markets. The clothing of Venice and the Veneto takes up the first third of Book I, and he places Venice at the center of the European stage. For Vecellio, clothing materializes the civic virtue of dress as it had for Marin Sanudo (Marino Sanuto) at the beginning of the century.³¹ It distinguishes the noble rank, not the wealth, of the individual. He invokes ancient Venetian values to remind all Venetians of proper gendered behavior.

Vecellio presents dress also as an indicator of character. A traditional style of dress reveals a virtuous style of being, especially among noblemen and noblewomen of the past:

Truly worthy of admiration is the great modesty of dress practiced by the first founding fathers of this famous city, a modesty as great as her splendor. You see in this drawing that in those early days the noblemen imitated their prince in their dress and even in their customs, though such noblemen did not wear the doge's hat, which was reserved as a lofty symbol for the leader alone.³²

He interprets a man's gown with the wide, full *dogalina* sleeve as a sign of dignity and political wisdom, while the dogaresa's *dogalina* sleeves are a

³¹ Patricia H. Labalme and Laura Sanguineti White, eds., *Venice Città Excelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo*, trans. Linda L. Carroll (Baltimore, 2008).

³² Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 97.

sign of sumptuousness and grandeur. The Procurators wide-open sleeves distinguish them, as doctors of medicine, ambassadors or heads of regiments (Fig. 24.1):

Senators and Knights in our day wear the ducal gown, with full, open sleeves. They do not wear it made of gold, out of respect for the Prince, but on some occasions they wear a stole of gold brocade... While this same ample gown is still worn from time to time by men who occupy certain magistracies... only Knights, the Procuratori and those who have been Savi Grandi and Consiglieri wear them all the time.³³

Vecellio painstakingly records Venetian traditions fading away, and he announces customs on the horizon. He celebrates the new goods they make, consume, and export in the present. Textile terms, therefore, come from the cities and nations of Europe, such *rascia*, *cambrai* or *cambrada*, *scotto*, and *ferrandina*, which made their way both into the shops where Venetians bought cloth and into the language they spoke. He states that the textile merchants of the *Merceria* in Venice wear an "overgown with sleeves *a comeo* like that of the noblemen. It is usually a short *ferraiuolo* and is made of *rascia*—a plain wool—or *ciambellotto*—camlet—or silk *canevaccia*—all fabrics that depend on the season." *Rascia*, a lighter weight herringbone wool cloth, was one of a number of lightweight fabrics that were less costly than other wools of the period.³⁴

By the 16th century, dress became increasingly aligned with an individual's need for personal expression and the desire to assume different roles in different contexts. The illustrated *album amicorum* [album of friends] document early modern travelers' fascination with swiftly changing fashions, regional customs, family lineage, and manuscript decoration. A predecessor of the 16th-century printed costume book, the illustrated manuscript album preserves in its pages colored depictions of dress, local scenes of work and entertainment, modes of transportation (boats, litters or sedan chairs, carriages, horses), regional festivals, games, and civic rituals such as weddings, funerals, and state and religious ceremonies, often with identifying captions written in contemporary hand. Venetian customs, rituals, and fashions are frequently portrayed in foreigners' albums and therefore constitute an invaluable resource for historians of dress.

³³ "Present-Day Senators and Knights of the City of Venice," in Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 156.

³⁴ For a glossary of textile terms, see Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, pp. 580–93.



Figure 24.1. Present-Day Senators and Knights of the City of Venice. Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi, et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

The watercolor and gouache illustrations reveal a keen attention to major fashion changes such as the cuts and designs of a garment, particular uses of fabrics and trims, and luxurious accessories such as feathered fans, hats with plumes, precious fabrics, and more.

Textile Production and Trade in Venice

As one of the most industrialized cities of Europe in the 16th century, the Venetian state was both a major manufacturer of textiles and a trading crossroad. Its wealth was attributed primarily to the many wool and silk producers, shipbuilders, fullers, glassmakers, leather workers, and printers who worked there.³⁵ Although the Venetian economy declined after 1500 as a result of the Portuguese trade with the East and the rise of the New World economy, the production and consumption of textiles, particularly silk, attest to the fact that the Venetian economy had shifted from a pan-Mediterranean focus to a more local and regional one that emphasized the development of new textile production techniques that satisfied broader-based consumers' needs for lower-quality products. In fact, the silk industry emerged as one of the most resilient of the Venetian economy in the late 16th century, largely owing to the support of its silk guild, which insisted in keeping up with consumer demand.³⁶

Product diversification (dyes, wools, density of weaves) was continually stressed in Venice. Increasing sub-specializations in the production of garments, the development of new places to shop, and the rise in the number of patents that provided monopoly rights to manufacture new goods all meant that the Venetian textile industry was in a position to be able to accommodate large sections of the population by imitating expensive fabrics such as silk and velvet and substituting them with cheaper textiles, for example, with an iridescent finish that looked like luxurious silks and velvets.³⁷ A Venetian specialty in the late 15th and 16th centuries was *brocadello*, a mixed fabric made up of silk threads mixed with cheaper fibers such as linen. It achieved the shiny iridescent finish of shot silk in which

³⁵ Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth* (Baltimore, 1999), pp. 151–82; Joanne M. Ferraro, "The Manufacture and Movement of Goods," in *The World of the Renaissance* (London, 2007), p. 92.

³⁶ Molà, *The Silk Industry*; Paola Lanaro, ed. *At the Centre of the Old World: Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Mainland, 1400–1800* (Toronto, 2006), pp. 29–34, 39–42, 46, 378.

³⁷ Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 199–210.

the silk threads stood out in lustrous relief above the stiffer linen warp, a fabric Cesare Vecellio highlights in his description of the “Winter Clothing of Venetian Noblewomen and other Wealthy Women in Our Time” (Fig. 24.2):

The clothing shown here displays the greatest extent to which Venetian women wear ornaments of precious gold, rich in pearls and other jewels, and how much effort and care they put into their coiffures . . . Every precious thing dangles from them, from their necks to their breast, complementing and embellishing the bodice and forming a necklace composed of large pearls of considerable value . . . Over their *camicia* they wear a *carpetta*, most often of *brocatello*, and in the winter it is lined with precious furs.³⁸

In the second half of the 16th century, pressure- and heat-treating the fabric reproduced on plain velvet the effect of damask without the high cost in weaving it.³⁹ Some fabrics were made with wool thread, often called *rascia* (or rash, a twill fabric similar to serge, made in both silk and wool, named after Raska, its city of origin in Serbia), or with goat or camel hair such as *ciambelotto* (camlet, originally camelhair). Mixed fabrics such as *canevaccia* (this had a silk warp and a weft of waste silk and flax, sometimes with gold or silver thread) and *buratto* (this had a silk warp and a wool weft and could be used, depending on its weight and transparency, either for veils or for awnings in gondolas) were increasingly popular in the 16th century.⁴⁰

Retailing, too, moved in a parallel direction to changes in consumer behavior, as there were many more venues for acquiring goods—the shop, the street, public markets where itinerant traders, mercers and merchants displayed and sold their wares, fairs, and lotteries—than ever before. It is even likely that consumers influenced retailers’ decisions to integrate new products into their trades, for retailers profited handsomely from a reduction in prices coupled with increased consumer demand.⁴¹ In addition, global networks involved a wide range and type of commercial market for individual consumption, from localized shops to international fairs and auctions and overseas depots. The expansion of Europe meant

³⁸ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, pp. 182–83.

³⁹ Belfanti, “The Civilization of Fashion,” p. 273.

⁴⁰ On silk weaves, see Dorothy K. Burnham, *Warp and Weft: A Dictionary of Textile Terms* (New York, 1980), pp. 123–27.

⁴¹ Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300–1600* (Baltimore/London, 1993); Bruno Blondé, et al., eds., *Retailers and Consumer Changes in Early Modern Europe: England, France, Italy and the Low Countries* (Tours, 2005), p. 6.



Figure 24.2. Winter Clothing of Venetian Noblewomen and Other Wealthy Women in Our Time. Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi, et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

an unprecedented increase in two-way cultural exchanges of knowledge that traveled to and fro with Europeans into unknown areas around the globe—from West Africa to India, China, and Japan in the east, to the Americas in the west. New settlers brought with them the most recent technological inventions in the production of cloth and returned to Europe with a more broadly based knowledge of customs of dress.⁴²

Silk Industry in Venice

A specialized silk processing industry first formed in Venice during the 13th century. In the 14th century, the Venetian Senate reacted with flexibility to the decline in the Levantine silk market when it approved the integration of foreign artisanal and manufacturing knowledge about processes and products with what was at that time an underdeveloped manufacturing know-how in Venice. A permanent settlement of foreign craftsmen brought with them critical technological expertise in textile production. In addition, Lucchese silks were produced by Lucchese silk workers living in Venice who had fled their city because of growing political unrest.⁴³

On a daily basis, unfinished fabrics and the raw materials used to make cloth arrived in Venice from all around the world. By the 15th century, the Venetian mainland became the main producer of raw silk for northern and central Italy.⁴⁴ Raw silk was imported from the Middle East and was refined and finished by spinners (*filatoi*), warpers (*ordiresse*), dyers (*tentori*), and weavers (*testori*). Using the putting-out system, the entrepreneurial silk merchant also became involved in collecting mulberry leaves and raising silk worms, reeling, spinning and throwing, boiling and dyeing,

⁴² Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London, 1996), pp. 3–90; Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley, 2002); Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch, eds., *The Material Renaissance: Costs and Consumption in Italy, 1400–1650* (Manchester/New York, 2007); Patricia Fortini Brown, "Behind the Walls: The Material Culture of Venetian Elites," in John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 295–338; Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice: Art, Architecture and the Family* (New Haven/London, 2004), pp. 86–89.

⁴³ Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 43–51, 144–47, 218–19; Luca Molà, *La Comunità dei Lucchesi a Venezia* (Venice, 1994); Lanaro, *At the Centre of the Old World*, p. 42; and Andrea Mozzato, "The Production of Woolens in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Venice," in Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre of the Old World*, p. 86.

⁴⁴ Doretta Davanzo Poli, "L'arte e il mestiere della tessitura," in *I mestieri della moda a Venezia, dal XIII al XVIII secolo: The Crafts of the Venetian Fashion Industry from the Thirteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Venice, 1995); Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant*, p. 177; Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 94–95, 222–26, 232–35, 237–41, 243–45.

and warping and weaving.⁴⁵ When merchants did not collect the materials themselves, they acted as investors by purchasing the best raw materials available such as dyes and yarns. The *tintori della seda* [silk dyers] were of the highest quality; the registers of the silk guild suggests that by the mid-16th century there were 30,000 men and women employed in the different stages of silk manufacturing.⁴⁶ Male merchants could also barter textiles outside the guild by forming partnerships, for example, with wool manufacturers since noble merchants were not obliged to enter the guild until 1515.⁴⁷ This mercantile practice required a vast knowledge of international markets and their fluctuations and depended upon personal affiliations in markets far from Venice. There was a notable difference, therefore, between the person who worked the cloth and the merchant who purchased the raw materials and finally arranged for its sale. Nevertheless, once the finished textile was complete, it had to pass the inspection of a special office set up in Venice at the Rialto—the *Paragon*—which compared the finished textile with a high-quality prototype in order to guarantee its perfection.⁴⁸

Venice maintained this preeminent position in the world's cloth markets throughout the period, a remarkable fact considering that the city itself had none of its own supplies necessary to produce textiles. The silk industry flourished even when the wool sector was in crisis in other parts of the peninsula. Valuable silk damasks, silk brocades, and other textiles made from a mix of silk and other fibers expanded unabated throughout the 16th century until the 1630–31 plague.⁴⁹

Vecellio's textile vocabulary materializes this global history of cloth when condensed into the fabrics produced and worn by 16th-century Venetians. A light silk, *ormesino*, was named after [H]Ormuz, an island in the Persian Gulf, where the fabric had been made for centuries before its production became the craft of the Venetian *ormesini*—for whom a *Fondamenta* in Canareggio is still named. *Tabino* or *tabi*, a rich, heavy silk given a watered or moiré finish, was originally made in al-Attabiya, a district of Baghdad, and was used to form the attire of "Young Men of the City

⁴⁵ Edoardo Demo, "Wool and Silk," in Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre of the Old World*, p. 222.

⁴⁶ Crouzet Pavan, *Venice Triumphant*, p. 310 n. 76; Norbert Heyl and Cristina Gregorin, *Venice Master Artisans* (Ponzano/Treviso, 2003), p. 25; and Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 16, 268, 290.

⁴⁷ Mozzato, "The Production of Woolens," p. 91.

⁴⁸ Gregorin, *Venice Master Artisans*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ Orsi Landini, "Da vanità a virtù," p. 58.

of Venice, and of Students." This dress allows the wearer, Vecellio states, "to move easily and quickly. In the winter they wear a tall black cap, called *à tozzo*, of gathered velvet, and in the summer hats of *canevaccia* of silk or *tabino* (a rich watered silk), or *ormesino*, with linings of colored taffeta."⁵⁰ *Damasco*, damask, a figured silk, echoes the name of the city where it was first made, Damascus, in southwest Syria. Venice had been importing the splendid textiles of the East for a long time before Venetian cloth makers began exporting their own *damaschino*, a textile patterned in arabesques of golden or silk flowers, which they sent especially to Constantinople. Vecellio commends the "Rector [or Governor] of the Students' Schools at the University of Padua" [(Fig. 24.3) for his rank of knight and Venetian noble; he also celebrates the beautiful damasks that form his silhouette:

He often dresses with great pomp, all in red velvet, *damasco* or satin. For his many triumphal processions and festivals, he covers his head with a cap of black velvet that has small points or horns like a priest's cap, but is a little longer in the back. His gown is of gold brocade and has a hood, lined with marten fur, that rests on his shoulder. Under this gown he wears a *cremesino* satin or silk doublet with gold embroidery and trim or lace also of gold. His breeches are made of the same cloth and his stockings are silk knit.⁵¹

Velvet Production in Venice

Italy by the 14th century was known for its lush red velvets. Their high cost was based in part on the dyestuffs used. Powerful dyers' guilds, the *setaioli*, regulated all aspects of their production. In 1395, Venetian velvet workers separated from silk producers; velvet workers were the only producers legally permitted to create worked velvet, but silk workers were still allowed to make smooth velvet from silk.⁵² Regulators were skeptical of cochineal and preferred the prized *kermes*, the new red dye sources from the Americas, when early in the 16th century shipments began to arrive in northern Italy. After the dyers' guilds conducted experiments and trials with Mexican *cognilia*, cochineal began to be accepted by mid-century.⁵³ To insure that *kermes* had been used in the production of the velvets, a system of coded selvages was implemented whereby a solid green silk

⁵⁰ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 209; Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 55–72.

⁵¹ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 212.

⁵² Gregorin, *Venice Master Artisans*, p. 27.

⁵³ de Maria, *Becoming Venetian*, pp. 45–47.



Figure 24.3. Rector [or Governor] of the Students' Schools at the University of Padua. Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi, et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

selvage on red velvet indicated its implementation, while a green selvage with a silver thread down the center marked the use of “foreign” (American) cochineal.⁵⁴

Many silk manufacturing sectors located in the Venetian state—Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Padua, Vicenza, Feltre, and Belluno—also responded to northern European merchants’ demands for silk taffeta, satin, silk damask, and interwoven gold and silver threaded silk brocades. These cities took part in and revitalized international trade by exporting semi-finished materials, and wool and silk fabrics, to various locations on the Italian peninsula, in Europe, and in the Near East, and by adjusting manufactured goods to international market demands. Due also to these cities’ extensive power sources in water and wood, and to large quantities of medium to high quality local wool, entrepreneur merchants no longer depended upon foreign raw materials; instead, they produced a high quality raw material that was the substance for the locally produced woolen fabrics sold not only in Venice but also in several cities of central and southern Italy, in German areas in the Balkans, and in the Levant.⁵⁵

Velvet, which was more expensive to produce than silk, benefited once again from the arrival in Venice of expert weavers from nearby Lucca who created innovative international patterns with rich floral motifs that were “worked” into the velvet’s folds.⁵⁶ *Velluto riccio*, or pile on pile velvet, was woven around circular and elliptical rings that gave it a dense, three-dimensional surface; *velluto soprariccio*, in addition to its rich chiaroscuro surface, had gold or silver loops woven into it; *velluto ad opera* had designs of contrasting color or gold worked across its surface. The heaviness and different lengths of threads created full-bodied velvet that was associated in the minds of its onlookers and wearers with sumptuous living and wealth. These fabrics set the standard for the choices made by all of Europe’s nobility. The “Vicar, or Doctor, or Assessor, or Local Magistrate of the Venetian State on the Mainland,” Vecellio reports, “wear long robes of velvet with narrow sleeves lined with marten or lynx or other furs during the winter.”⁵⁷ Indeed, Venetian velvets were renowned throughout the world. They consisted of pile-weave silks on a satin background. The three-dimensional effects were created by inserting an extra warp yarn in addition to the background warp with the help of small iron tools. Some

⁵⁴ Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 146–48, 166–67, 173–76.

⁵⁵ Demo, “Wool and Silk,” p. 221.

⁵⁶ Gregorin, *Venice Master Artisans*, pp. 27–28.

⁵⁷ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 211.

of these loops were then cut in certain places. In one of many examples in which Vecellio commends the beauty of Venetian produced velvet, he also describes the sumptuous colors of the velvet mantles worn by the “Head Captain” in Venice (Fig. 24.4):

He dresses entirely in velvet or *cremesino* satin . . . he also wears a *pavonazzo* mantle, open in front and at the sides, which he fastens here and there with silk laces, which are tied into very beautiful bows. He cinches his undergarment with a velvet belt with silver buckles, and from this hangs a weapon more like a scimitar than a sword, as long as the gown itself. He wears stockings and shoes of the same color as the undergarment, and a black cap. And the mantle . . . is normally *pavonazzo*, he wears in red, like the undergarment, on certain solemn occasions.⁵⁸

Wool Production in Venice

Just as the silk industry had a notable presence of foreign artisans in Venice, the wool industry was even more varied and multi-ethnic, with raw materials arriving in the city from English, Greek, French, Spanish, and Levantine sources. It had a solid production structure with scores of firms that attracted specialist foreign workers. Venice played the role of commercial intermediary between two economic areas—Mediterranean and continental Europe—just as it did in the late 13th century. The luxury, medium, and low-quality textile industry in Venice benefited from a dual production system for both silk and wool by diversifying their production to suit the needs of wealthy buyers and a more generalized medium or low quality cloth for export.⁵⁹

While the wool industry in general collapsed in the city of Venice by 1550, it continued to flourish in Bergamo throughout the 17th century. The silk industry, by contrast, continued to grow in Venice and on the mainland until the collapse of the Republic in 1797.⁶⁰ In general, the explosive growth in the wool industry in the Venetian state during the first half of the 16th century was not impeded by commercial powers; its growth can be attributed to the loss of maritime supremacy, the flight of foreign capital to a safe haven during the Italian wars, and to wool manufacturers’ flexible response to changes in the market by producing new lightweight

⁵⁸ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 164.

⁵⁹ Mozzatto, “The Production of Woolens,” p. 52.

⁶⁰ Ferraro, *Venice: History of the Floating City*, p. 184.



Figure 24.4. Head Captain. Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi, et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

cloths in the Dutch style, in demand by Levantine clients.⁶¹ Wool was either re-exported or processed by Venetian manufacturers.⁶² The market demand eventually for lighter wools gave way in the 16th century to the beret and knitting industry.⁶³ Verona and Padua were noted for their stockings and berets. Venetians, however, always had to be careful that the exporting of local textiles did not compete with foreign fabrics in the places where they were sent.

Already by the mid-15th century, protectionism on all Venetian wool production was backed by protectionist measures.⁶⁴ Following plague or war, Venice shortened the period of residency required to obtain citizenship, so that drapers and wool manufacturers could open workshops at the Rialto, load their merchandise on ships, and trade directly with foreigners without Venetian intermediaries. Only the Fondaco dei Tedeschi—the German trading house in Venice—continued to have a permanent trading place in Venice despite stringent legislation, and it remained the sole prerogative of Venetian merchants even though Genoa and Milan tried to gain some portion of this commercial traffic.⁶⁵ Finally in 1558, the Senate ruled that only original citizens could trade in woolen and silk fabrics because, they argued, too many foreigners had become wealthy textile producers while working and living in Venice. The government reviewed annually just how much imported wool should be sold to foreigners and how much instead should be reserved for Venetian artisans.⁶⁶ From the late 15th century there were increased supplies of local raw materials and an abundance of imported wools. This meant that the Venetian state was able to meet internal and external demand by means of diversified production. The guilds also attempted to discipline the new arrivals with greater rigor.

Levantine clients frequented Venetian and Italian markets after 1530 in search of Florentine and Lombard cloth and therefore the Venetian wool

⁶¹ Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," pp. 52, 75; Demo, "Wool and Silk," p. 228.

⁶² Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," p. 76; Molà, *Silk Industry*, pp. 58–88.

⁶³ On market demand for lighter wools, see Demo, "Wool and Silk," p. 222. The knitting "revolution" during the 16th century gradually took the place of clothes traditionally made of woven cloth. Knitted hosiery, for example, was a ready-to-wear item that did not have to rely on a tailor's skill. See Carlo Marco Belfanti, "Hosiery Manufacturing in the Venetian Republic 16–18 Centuries," in Lanaro, ed., *At the Centre of the Old World*, p. 274.

⁶⁴ Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," pp. 52, 99.

⁶⁵ Crouzet Pavan, *Venice Triumphant*, pp. 121–22; Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," pp. 87–88.

⁶⁶ Molà, *The Silk Industry*, pp. 153–57; Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," p. 89.

industry as a whole developed further. Trade policies resisted too much protectionism in favor of local manufacturers and were careful not to ban foreign fabrics for retail and dress. By permitting sale of all foreign cloths, the Venetian senate reinvigorated the internal market. Foreign commerce sustained the wool industry because it provided, among other things, customs income that was supported by the wool guild, and it increased production by boosting the local export of local cloths through trading.⁶⁷

Noble merchants outside the guild sold and bartered woolens or formed partnerships with wool manufacturers, supplying them with raw materials, since nobles were not obliged to enter the guild until 1515.⁶⁸ Often the entrepreneur merchant belonged to the city elite, owned a lot of capital, and ran his own workshop from the bottom floor of his house, thereby concentrating the production process in his own hands. The remaining raw materials that had not been sold to the manufacturers were processed in his own residences or workshops. Imported semi-finished products were supplied to teasers, dyers, stretchers, and shearers who controlled the finishing process.⁶⁹ The wool manufacturer also imported his own raw materials and took charge of the spinning, weaving, dyeing, or finishing processes; sometimes he would give the unfinished product to a shearer for fulling, dyeing, or stretching before resale back to the manufacturers. This manufacturing system created an all Venetian or Veneto sector of the market by producing local cloth and finishing foreign cloth.

On an international level, textile manufacturing was out of the purview of the artisan. In Venice the merchant had the opportunity to profit from a double putting out system which meant that they could import wool and other fabrics without any intermediary, and they could then "put it out" to merchant employers who, finally, "put it out" to the craftsmen, a practice that dated back to 1528. The Venetian market also provided lodging for merchants coming from the mainland and specific shops to sell the goods. Since legislation affected solely nobles, the non-noble merchant who received raw materials from lower-ranking artisans could process the materials in his own residence or workshop or oversee the finishing processes before it was sold back to the manufacturers.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," pp. 97, 99.

⁶⁸ Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," p. 91.

⁶⁹ Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," p. 93.

⁷⁰ Mozzatto, "The Production of Woolens," pp. 91, 93.

Imported Fabrics in Venice

Cotton imported from the East brought such wealth to Venice that it was called *herba de oro* (golden grass). The most common cotton fabrics were *fustagni* [fustian], which were a mix of wool and cotton fibers, and *bombasina*. Linens such as *tela di rensa*, which was imported from Rheims, or *tela cambrada*, a less refined linen imported from Cambrai, were used to make luxurious undergarments or shirts. Linen fibers were purchased in bulk and woven and embroidered, typically by female family members. The most expensive Venetian fabrics were those which were heavily brocaded with gold yarns and threads. Cloth of gold, or *restagni*, was reserved technically for the doge and dogaressa, even though some patrician women wore gowns made from cloth of gold.⁷¹

Women's Work in the Textile Industry in Venice: Lace and Silk

Lace embroidery upon net and linen, with and without the counting of threads in geometric designs for cutwork, was the predecessor of needle-point lace first practiced by women in Venice. So too, lace with free-moving designs of *punto in aria* and *punto tagliato a fogliami* for bobbin lace were unique to Venice.⁷² *Punto in aria* lace was created with needles; the few warp threads were cut and drawn out of the fabric to give the impression that it had been worked without a foundation.⁷³ With the diffusion of the mulberry tree from Sicily and Andalusia to northern Italy, rural women unwound cocoons of silk, combed them, spun them, and sold silk thread to urban merchants.⁷⁴ In general, lace-making over the course of the first half of the 16th century was considered a noble woman's activity. But by the first quarter of the 16th century, on account of the many lace-making manuals published in Venice by Zoppino and the prolific publisher Mathio Pagan, more and more lace fabrics began to be used in clothing and in furnishings on the commercial market. Needle lace evolved from complex cutwork embroideries; bobbin lace was applied to

⁷¹ Isabella Campagnol Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," in Jill Condra, ed., *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing through World History*, vol. 2: 1501–1800 (Westport, Conn., 2008), pp. 13, 15.

⁷² Margaret Harrington Daniels, "Early Pattern Books for Lace and Embroidery," *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club* 17.2 (1933), 9–13; Doretta Davanzo Poli, *Il Merletto Veneziano* (Novara, 1998).

⁷³ Santina M. Levey, *Lace: A History* (London, 1982), p. 21.

⁷⁴ Ferraro, "The Manufacture and Movement of Goods," p. 94.

men's and women's necklines and cuffs on their undergarments or shirts (*camicia* also called a "guardacore" for women). These new techniques eventually transformed lace-making into a commercial activity carried out on the Venetian islands of Burano and Pellestrina, where specialized *punto in aria* incorporated vegetable scrolls into their patterns because they were symbols of virginity, strength, and life.⁷⁵ Patrician women on their wedding day were presented with a *camisa de oro* (golden *camicia*) made of precious lace with ruffled collars that were starched with honey and thickly pleated and kept in place by a metallic structure, as Vecellio records when describing the dress of "Brides Outside the House after They Have Married": "Their garments are white but with beautiful designs woven into them, and their *baveri* have high lace collars, beautifully constructed of standing openwork lace, as are their *bracciali*."⁷⁶

A year after the publication of *Habiti antichi* (1590), Vecellio published a four-book collection of lace patterns with the title *Corona delle nobili et virtuose donne*, two dedicated to the Venetian noblewoman Viena Vendramin Nani. Lace was made by women in Venice but worn by both men and women, in beautiful patterns and at high cost. This helps explain why this book was republished in 1596, expanded by a fifth section, and again in 1601 from Vecellio's Frezzaria printing house, under a copyright that he renewed every year, including the year of his death in 1601. It continued to be reprinted after his death. Another reason for the success of this lace book, which belonged to a genre that had been popular in Venice since the 1530s, may have been its completeness: it combined 450 intricate illustrations with practical advice about lace-making, suggesting that Vecellio had accurately foreseen his audience: people interested in luxury textiles from many places. Captions in the book name patterns as coming from all over Europe, and from the Ottoman Empire and Algeria. Vecellio offers patterns for specific purposes—making trim for handkerchiefs, for example—and he emphasizes the elegance of his patterns with names such as "Imperiali Cantoni di punto in aria, Mostra Bellissima et superba, per ogni lavoro" [corners of needlework lace worthy of emperors, of a most beautiful and noble appearance suitable for any technique].⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Gregorin, *Venice's Artisans*, p. 29; and Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," pp. 16–17.

⁷⁶ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 179.

⁷⁷ On Vecellio's lace book, see Levey, *Lace*, p. 7. The first lace pattern book was printed in Venice in 1527 and was compiled by Giovanni Antonio Tagliente, *Essempio di recammi*, which was followed by Niccolo Zoppino's *Esempario di lavori* in 1529. In 1530 Andrea Valvassore, called Guadagnino, a printer and wood-cutter in Venice, published Italian designs in two undated volumes, *Corona di racammi* and *Esempario di lavori*. On these books, see

Women and children in rural areas were involved in the first two phases of silk production as spinners and weavers. Women also contributed to the Venetian guilds as fustian weavers, spinners, embroiderers, comb-makers, and secondhand dealers. Spinning, needlework, and lace-making, typically women's production, constituted a specialized skill, not merely a branch of the decorative arts used to adorn the human body. Women, however, were always inadequately compensated in financial terms for this hard work and skill.⁷⁸

Women's Accessories

Along with lace trims, other Venetian accoutrements for female garments included pearl necklaces, brooches pinned in the center of the bodice, and long, heavily jeweled gold belts. Panties or *calzoncini alla galeotta*, akin to men's breeches, were often worn by Venetian courtesans under their dresses, sometimes embroidered with sayings such as "voglio il core" [I want your heart].⁷⁹ Buttons were made from silver, gold, mother-of-pearl, and amber.⁸⁰ Veils or *cappe* were produced from the finest and sheerest silks and were large and long enough to cover the faces of unmarried girls. Shoes, or *scarpette*, from the late 14th century were flat and often made of the same fabrics as the dress, or of fine leather. They were decorated with carved or stamped motifs but evolved in the 16th century into higher platform wedged *pianelle*, which did not cover the heels and were created with overlapping layers of cork covered in leather in order to protect the feet from mud and garbage, with soles reaching as high as 20 inches.⁸¹ Women also wore ankle boots (*borzacchini*) made of leather. Ostrich-feathered fans, or from cardboard, were decorated with decoupage motifs and sometimes had ivory, wood, or tortoise-shell handles. They were either folding in the Spanish style or in the form of a rectangular flag. Purses were made of leather with embossed patterns and were worn suspended from a simple leather belt around a woman's waist. Belts could also be more elaborately made with gold chains. They helped

Levey, *Lace*, pp. 6, 18. On lace-making in Venice, see Brown, *Private Lives*, pp. 113–16; and Levey, *Lace*, pp. 9–10, 13–14.

⁷⁸ Satya Bratta Datta, "Invisible Women: The Working Experiences of Venetian Lace-makers," in Datta, *Women and Men in Early Modern Venice* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 183–218.

⁷⁹ Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," p. 28.

⁸⁰ Orsi Landini, "Da vanità a virtù," p. 63.

⁸¹ Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," p. 29.

to carry essential items such as needle and thread and thimbles, ivory combs, small boxes for perfume, and small clocks. Gloves were made of silk or leather or linen, even fish skin. They were decorated with intricate embroidery, lined with fur, and, sometimes, were slashed on the knuckles in order to let rings show through. Fur stole muzzles symbolized marital chastity and faithfulness, and flea pelts with a muzzle covered by a gold mask were studded with precious stones replacing the eyes. Handkerchiefs made of fine linen in big squares were decorated with embroidery and small lace trims or fringes but only became a regular accessory in the last decades of the 16th century.

Women's Dress in the 1400s

By the first decades of the 15th century, Venetian women's bodices were long and ended above the hips, without coming to a point. Vecellio describes a typical 15th-century silhouette for the Venetian young woman ("Another Maiden in a Different Style of Dress") (Fig. 25.5), which included an undergarment (*camicia* or *carpetta*) of thin linen or silk, sometimes an undergown (*sottana*) over that, and an overgown (*robba* or *rochetto*) or draped mantle, with a short bodice, tight fitting on the bust and with a generous boat-shaped neckline. Open at the sides, the overgown was often cut low in the back.

This woman has a *sottana* in the style of a *carpetta*, woven and embroidered with various colors... its opening [the bodice] has the shape of a perfect triangle and is full of interwoven patterns, with a border ornamented with pearls. On their shoulders they wore a thin, transparent gold veil, the neck adorned... with a hanging jewel... The gown had sleeves of various colors, open at the elbow and trimmed with various ornaments.⁸²

Toward the end of the century, as Vecellio notes in relation to "Venetian Clothing of Former Times, From Only a Hundred Years Ago or Slightly More," women's gowns were "multi-colored, with horizontal strips of various hues and with a band of gold or *pavonazzo* velvet at the bottom." While some women preferred darker fabrics as signs of modesty and restraint in the earlier part of the century, fabrics became progressively more elaborate in the second half of the century with velvet overgowns brocaded with gold threads. Since the overgown had a high waistline and

⁸² Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 143.



Figure 24.5. Another Maiden in a Different Style of Dress. Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi, et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

was floor length, long narrow trains were attached to the waists. Detachable sleeves, which were large and very expensive, were composed of two different parts—the lower with vertical slashes to let the *camicia* show through in small puffs, as Vecellio notes when speaking about 15th- and early 16th-century Venetian maidens' sleeves: "open behind, embroidered, and fastened with gold buttons, and in these openings the *camicia* could also be seen."⁸³ The upper part of the sleeves were often laced at the shoulder and were long and narrow and hung to the ground. At times they stopped at the elbow, and the rest of the arm was covered by the *camicia*. Brides and other women of high rank often left their shoulders uncovered. Only a *pettorale* [plackard or pectoral, which was a piece of cloth that covered the breast] on top of the bodice covered the neck and *décolleté*. It was made of cloth of gold and needle-worked all over with pearls and jewels that matched the sleeves. Some women's sleeves were "very deeply slashed, allowing their *camicie* to show through, and they wore their *bracciali* [arm or shoulder rolls] and puffed sleeves slashed, as well."⁸⁴ Slashing was not confined only to sleeves. The silks, satins, damasks, and velvets that made the gowns were also slashed with decorative patterns such as zigzags, crosses, flowers, and other motifs made visible with warps and wefts that were dyed in different colors.⁸⁵

1500s

Historians of Venetian dress locate the most significant shifts in the women's silhouette as taking place approximately every 20 years.⁸⁶ These transformations mainly affected the *décolleté*, the length of the bodice, the shape of the sleeves, and the coiffure. In the early decades of the 16th century, the bodice had a low neckline and was very rigid. It opened almost immediately below the breast, stopping at the waist, and often descending below it into a V. The neckline was wide and square and the gown's skirt gathered into soft folds. Detachable sleeves were streamlined and

⁸³ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, pp. 142, 145.

⁸⁴ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 148.

⁸⁵ Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," pp. 15–16.

⁸⁶ Doretta Davanzo Poli, "Abbigliamento Veneto: Attraverso un'iconografia datata: 1517–1571," in Giorgio Fossaluzza, ed., *Paris Bordone e il suo tempo: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi*, Treviso, 28–30 ottobre 1985 (Treviso, 1987), pp. 243–53; Davanzo Poli, *Abiti antiche e moderni dei Veneziani* (Venice, 2002).

edged with richly embroidered cuffs. The coiffure was composed of curls that dangled from the ears onto the forehead. In the 1550s this silhouette changed again when the bodice became even more pointed and extremely rigid, maintained by structural supports known as *costelle*, or small pieces of ribbed cotton fabric that held the bodice open in the front as the *décolleté* fell well below the breast and shoulders. This exposed neckline was covered with a *bavaro*—a neck piece, sometimes made of richly embroidered fabric, or a neck ruff in a fan-shape, as Vecellio recalls in “Clothing Worn by the Women of Venice in 1550” (Fig. 24.6):

At their necks they wore twisted strands of gold, from which hung and lay on the breast a pendant of very precious gold . . . They wore belts of gold chains, falling to the floor, and their *baveri* were embroidered with roses and gold stars and studded with many jewels. heads they wore a black veil of transparent silk, which covered their foreheads.⁸⁷

At mid-century, Venetian noblewomen's gowns were more ornate, with many gold-chain belts and necklaces and shoulder coverings that were heavily embroidered with roses and gold stars and studded with gold jewels. Their undergarments were also intricately embroidered and showed through their large slashed oversleeves that in the winter were often lined with fur such as squirrel, marten, lynx, or ermine. The overgown was also called a *romana* and was a little different than the *zimarra*. It was low and open at the front and was often lined with rich furs, tied with silk sashes. A basic mantle also served as an overgown, and this was called a *sbernia*. It left one arm free.

By the end of the century, the female silhouette changed considerably into “two opposing V's, one created by the stiff bodices that encased the woman's torso and the other, upside down . . . made the skirts almost conical in shape.”⁸⁸ Vecellio criticizes women's fashions of his day not only for their excessiveness and high costs in producing them but also for their disproportionate parts. They included a high-necked collar with “stiff, upright ruffles that rise almost above the head; these are particularly unsightly, not only because they lack proportion but also because they interfere with the *fazzuolo* [a piece of fabric used to cover the neck or head], which (to tell the truth) falls down behind them in a very ugly

⁸⁷ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 152.

⁸⁸ Fabretti, “The Italian Renaissance,” p. 13.



Figure 24.6. Clothing Worn by the Women of Venice in 1550. Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi, et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

tangle.”⁸⁹ Lace patterns also became increasingly ornate in this period, using vegetable scrolls with acanthus, oak, and vine leaves that were for women symbols of virginity, strength, and the force of life. Animals, too, were the subjects of lace design and included rabbits, peacocks, and dolphins as well as mermaids and grotesques.⁹⁰

The Colors and Fashions of Male Dress

Unlike the frequently changing fashions of the noble Venetian women, the fashions and dress of patrician and citizen men remained largely the same—flowing floor-length robes—throughout the 15th and 16th centuries. Formal and official dress—togas as they were called—were the official dress of those officials who defended the city and the mainland state.⁹¹ Venice was a gerontocracy, ruled by very old men whose age was the qualification for governing their city. Office holders, however, were identified by a complex chromatic code, often brightly colored depending on the wearer’s social status and political rank. Every man who became a procurator had his portrait painted in which he swore allegiance to St. Mark, and these portraits were hung in the Procuratie Vecchie.

Black dominated the higher social echelons. At the very top of the hierarchy, officials wore white and gold, including the doge; crimson and scarlet (*cremesino* and *scarlatto*), both shades of red, were worn by senators and procurators. *Pavonazzo*, a color that covered a wide range of purplish hues, was worn in the 14th century by noble knights, Venetian senators, citizens, or merchants when traveling abroad, as documented in the pages of Vecellio’s costume book.⁹² By the 16th century, though, the color spectrum had changed, whereby black was the color worn daily by most elder patricians and citizens (also in times of mourning) but was not used for senatorial apparel. Black was the principal visible sign of an aristocratic station, and it became the synonym of elegance, refinement, piety,

⁸⁹ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 193.

⁹⁰ Fabretti, “The Italian Renaissance,” p. 17.

⁹¹ Brown, *Private Lives*, pp. 10–12. On the toga in relation to political worries regarding the defense of the mainland state, see Linda L. Carroll, “Money, Age and Marriage in Venice: A Brief Biocultural History,” *Politics and Culture* 1 (29 April 2010), <<http://www.politicsandculture.org>>.

⁹² Molà, *The Silk Industry*, p. 113.

seriousness, solemnity, and authority in the Republic.⁹³ Although some Italian writers feared that Venice's choice to wear black was influenced by the Spanish domination of other Italian cities (such as Milan, Genoa, and Naples) and Spanish taste, black was elected by Venetians because it signified to them the unparalleled stability of the Venetian Republic. Lodovico Dolce, a Venetian writer whose treatise on color was widely influential for painters and humanists alike, argued that black was worn in Venice because, in addition to having "something virile and temperate, [it] shows likewise firmness, because this color cannot change into another."⁹⁴

Procuratori, the most important public officials, were the only officials allowed to wear crimson clothing and ample sleeves. The Council of the Doge wore clothing dyed in purple, and red was worn only by members of the Council of Ten, another powerful office whose members oversaw, for example, national security. In Vecellio's section on "[T]he clothing of men of the nobility and other high ranks in Venice Today," he emphasizes how "A Venetian General in War Time" (when he was appointed General of the Venetian Republic during the last war Venice fought with Selim, the Great Turk) creates an "impression of great majesty and expresses a truly regal splendor . . . he was dressed entirely in *cremesino* velvet, with the ducal cap on his head and a golden mantle . . . the true Roman *paludamentum*, fastened on the right shoulder with massive gold buttons."⁹⁵

Every other official was expected to wear only black, although Vecellio comments that beneath their robes they in fact wore many other colors, as in the case of the "Administrators of the Arsenal": "Their gown is black in color, long, and with floor-length sleeves; and under this some wear a *sottana*, *pavonazzo* in color, but most wear a black one, and a Venetian cap."⁹⁶

When male patricians had amassed sufficient fortune with which to support their families by working outside of Venice until middle age, and had placed their sons in their own careers, they would return to the city to undertake government service. Required by law to accept all nominations to office, whether he wished them or not, such a man was honored

⁹³ Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," p. 18; Belfanti, "The Civilization of Fashion," p. 265.

⁹⁴ For the Dolce quote, see Belfanti, "The Civilization of Fashion," p. 265. See also Amedeo Quondam, *Tutti i colori del nero: Moda e cultura nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Florence, 2007), pp. 87–104.

⁹⁵ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 155.

⁹⁶ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 172.

by his city to wear crimson in his outer garments.⁹⁷ Vecellio remarks on this custom when describing “The Magistrates of Venice:”

... the leaders of the Council of Ten of whom there are three in number, who change every month and are elected by lot. These men sometimes wear a red overgarment, which is true as well of the *Avvogadori* [state lawyers], another position of high honor and authority, and of the *Cancellier Grande*, who, like the Prince, stays in office for as long as he lives, and whose proposition is highly respected. The same gown is worn by the *Dottori* who go to govern cities and important places subject to the Venetian Republic. All these officials wear *pianelle* and red stockings.⁹⁸

While the older patriciate continued to dress in a sober black floor-length gown exclusive to their social station, the younger generation adopted much more colorful garments.⁹⁹ In “Dress of Young Men of the City of Venice, and of Students” (Fig. 24.7), Vecellio announces that young men’s fashions of his day are indeed very “handsome and elegant, and [they] allow[s] the wearer to move easily and quickly.” But he pays particular attention to a number of specific fashionable items that he singles out as so “lovely to see”—an embellished black cap, called “*a tozzo*,” of gathered velvet in the winter and in the summer of *canevaccia* of silk or *tabino* [a rich watered silk], or *ormesino* [a plain, light and inexpensive silk cloth of Levantine origin, widely produced in Italy in the 16th century] with linings of colored taffeta. Surrounding the hat is “a garland of *margaritine*” [enameled glass beads] and a “medal or precious stone, and a kind of gold braid interwoven with pearls or small crystals,” and a very colorful, and richly adorned silk or satin doublet with “gold or silk buttons and various trims and laces.” To this he adds that they wear “white ruffles” at the neck and “knee-length trousers of the same fabric as the doublet,” both of which are pinked and slashed so that they can “show off their differently colored taffeta linings.” To finish off the ensemble, they wear hose of silk or fine knit wool and shoes of Moroccan leather, “made with great elegance.” So elegant is this young man’s dress that Vecellio equates it to the rhetorical brilliance of a certain “Signor Fioravanti Foro,” whom he heard deliver a “divine oration full of new and lofty conceits, in a lovely and agreeable style embellished with marvelous learning and grace... that caused

⁹⁷ Carroll, “Money, Age and Marriage in Venice.”

⁹⁸ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 157.

⁹⁹ Carroll, “Money, Age and Marriage in Venice.”



Figure 24.7. Dress of Young Men of the City of Venice, and of Students. Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti Antichi, et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo* (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590).

wonder and admiration," in the company of a group of young fashionable students like the one whose fashions he describes.¹⁰⁰

It is fitting that Vecellio highly praises the dress of Venetian merchants. As part of the newly wealthy citizens of the Venetian state, Venetian merchants resembled Venetian nobles in their wide sleeves, called *a comeo*, hats *a tozzo*, and richly designed doublets made of satin and silks. Merchants, after all, were the ones to sell Venetian fashions to the world in their privately owned shops or at fairs and auctions that were frequented by hosts of buyers in search of luxurious commodities. For two centuries, they succeeded in making available textiles and garments, produced according to the latest innovations in textile manufacturing and finishing processes, to a multi-ethnic clientele.¹⁰¹

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¹⁰⁰ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, pp. 212–13.

¹⁰¹ Rosenthal and Jones, ed. and trans., *Cesare Vecellio, Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, p. 168.

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VENETIAN LANGUAGE

Ronnie Ferguson

1. *Venetian and the Historical Disciplines*

Almost every facet of Venice and of its remarkably long-lived Republic (*la Repub(b)lica Veneta*)¹ has been an object of study. This applies to the city's unique urban site and development as well as to the stable oligarchic constitution of the former independent Venetian state (the *Stado Veneto* or *Stato Veneto*)² with its mainland and overseas empires (*Stado da Terra* and *Stado da Mar*). Venetian art, architecture, music, theater, literature and print culture, institutions, and social organization have been, and continue to be, of intense concern to historians. The present volume is testimony to such exceptionally deep and wide-ranging scholarly interest. The most notable exception to this thorough scrutiny, and widespread dissemination of results into other disciplines, is language. While distinguished linguists have in the past 50 years devoted important studies to particular aspects of the 1000-year history of Venetian language, their results are largely confined to circles of linguists and philologists.³ It is only very recently that overarching monographs and syntheses of the history, trajectory, and status of this highly significant, influential, and in many ways unusual language/dialect have begun to be published and to enter the wider scholarly domain.⁴ It remains rare for historians of

¹ The terminology and spellings used here and elsewhere in the essay for Venetian institutions follow Venetian usage between 1400 and 1797.

² *Stado* from Latin STATUM "condition, position, state," with voicing of intervocalic T > /d/, represents the historically normal Venetian form (see Section 3 below). *Stato* is a Renaissance and early modern borrowing from Tuscan/Italian.

³ Full bibliographies of recent detailed studies of Venetian are in: Günter Holtus and Michael Metzeltin, "I dialetti veneti nella ricerca recente," in Günter Holtus and Michael Metzeltin, eds., *Linguistica e dialettologia veneta. Studi offerti a Manlio Cortelazzo* (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 1–38; Alberto Zamboni, "Venezien/Veneto," in Günter Holtus, Michael Metzeltin, and Christian Schmitt, *Lexikon der romanistischen Linguistik*, 8 vols (Tübingen, 1987–2005), vol. 4 (1988), pp. 517–38; Michele Cortelazzo and Ivano Paccagnella, "Il Veneto," in Francesco Bruni, ed., *L'Italiano nelle regioni. Lingua nazionale e identità regionali* (Turin, 1992), pp. 220–81; and Ronnie Ferguson, *A Linguistic History of Venice* (Florence, 2007).

⁴ The most important monographs on Venetian are Ferguson, *A Linguistic History of Venice*, and Rembert Eufe, "*Sta lingua ha un privilegio tanto grande.*" *Status und Gebrauch des Venezianischen in der Republik Venedig* (Frankfurt, 2006). The results of recent research

Venetian civilization to factor language into their arguments or to write with authority on what was the universal oral medium of the Republic of Venice and, in part, its written medium.⁵

This relative neglect is, superficially, surprising. An appreciation of the nature and origins of *venexian*,⁶ and of its evolution, longevity, and influence, are self-evidently of vital interest to historians and students of Venice, whatever their specialty. This applies most obviously at the practical level. The riches of the Venetian archives, from the Archivio di Stato at the Frari to the Marciana Library and the Museo Correr, are only partially exploitable without expertise in the textual tradition of Venetian going back 800 years. Fundamental published and unpublished resources for medieval, Renaissance, or early modern specialists are, in part, out of bounds without it. This applies to wills, inventories, and property declarations in the vernacular drafted not only in Venice but also in its overseas possessions such as Cyprus, Crete, and Ragusa.⁷ It applies to the statutes of Venice (*statuti de Ven(i)exia*) issued continuously from the 14th to the 18th centuries, to vernacular legislative texts from the state chancery up to the Cinquecento, to the Venetian trade-guild statutes (*mariegole* < Lat.

on Venetian, past and present, have also been disseminated in Manlio Cortelazzo, ed., *Guida ai dialetti veneti*, 15 vols (Padua, 1979–93); and in Zamboni, “Venezien/Veneto,” as well as through a series of high-quality syntheses published in Italy, notably: Alberto Zamboni, *Veneto* (Pisa, 1980); Cortelazzo and Paccagnella, “Il Veneto”; Edward Tuttle, “La varietà nel veneto premoderno. Paradigmi periferici, scelte morfostilistiche e macroaree,” in Anna Marinetti, Maria Teresa Vigolo, and Alberto Zamboni, eds., *Varietà e continuità nella storia linguistica del Veneto* (Rome, 1997), pp. 101–57; Carla Marcato, “Il Veneto,” in Manlio Cortelazzo et al., eds., *I dialetti italiani. Storia, struttura, uso* (Turin, 2002), pp. 296–328; Paola Benincà, “Il veneto medievale,” in Manlio Cortelazzo, ed., *Manuale di cultura veneta. Geografia, storia, lingua e arte* (Venice, 2004), pp. 113–24; and Benincà, “Il veneto moderno,” in Cortelazzo, ed., *Manuale di cultura veneta*, pp. 139–50.

⁵ This absence is not, it should be emphasized, confined to Venetian studies. A rare exception to the divorce of language from history is found in the work of historians of Anglo-Saxon England. This is almost certainly because scholars in the field come to it having trained, first, in Anglo-Saxon itself. A good example, employing etymology, phonology, and lexical borrowing to establish settlement and contact patterns, is Paul Bibire, “North Sea Language Contacts in the Early Middle Ages,” in Thomas Liszka and E. M. Walker, eds., *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Portland, 2001), pp. 88–107.

⁶ *Venexian* (Italian, *veneziano*) is historically the most common native spelling of Venetian, with the historic variants *venezian* and *venes(s)ian*. It is currently pronounced [veˈnesja] in the International Phonetics Association (IPA) transcription. The city has called itself *Venexia* (with Early Venetian (EV) minority variants *Veniexia* and *Ven(i)esia*) since the later medieval period, the current pronunciation being [veˈnesja]. *Venexia* is a presumed reflex of the Latin VENETIA.

⁷ See Daniele Baglioni, *La “scripta” italo-romanza del regno di Cipro* (Rome, 2006); Sally McKee, ed., *Wills from Late Medieval Venetian Crete 1312–1420* (Washington, 1998); and Diego Dotto, ed., *“Scriptae” venezianeggianti a Ragusa nel XIV secolo* (Rome, 2008).

MATRICŪLAE “registers”) until the fall of the Republic, and to diplomatic and commercial pacts and dispatches in the earlier part of our period. Fundamental merchant manuals such as the anonymous 14th-century *Zibaldone da Canal*,⁸ correspondence, record books, treatises, and coastal navigation maps (*portolani*) employ Venetian. So too do the dozens of 14th- and 15th-century vernacular inscriptions in Venetian public spaces of all types, unrivalled in their range and number in Italy, which provide, among other information, invaluable socio-cultural details about the lay confraternities (*sc(u)ole*), great and small, in the city. The Venetian vernacular gospels have their own history affiliated to the example of their French predecessors.⁹ The centuries-long Venetian chronicle tradition in the vernacular is both important and linguistically distinctive. It culminated in the indispensable 58-volume diaries of Marino Sanudo (Marino Sanuto, 1466–1536),¹⁰ with their remarkable impasto of Venetian, Tuscan, and northern Italian written norms,¹¹ as well as in those of Girolamo Priuli (1476–1547), Domenico Malipiero (1428–1515), and Pietro Dolfin (1427–1506).¹² Without Venetian, the primary sources for the history of theater in the Venetian state, from Ruzante to Goldoni, via the stage professionalism of the *commedia dell'arte* that was seminal in the European context, can only be studied at second hand. Key art-historical texts, including the notes of Marcantonio Michiel (1485–1552) on contemporary art collections in Venice and other northern Italian centres, Lorenzo Lotto's account book, and Marco Boschini's 17th-century panegyric on Venetian painting are in *venexian* or partly so.¹³ The recently published 1000-page manuscript thesaurus of the patrician Francesco Zorzi Muazzo,¹⁴ without which an understanding of 18th-century society in the *Serenissima* is incomplete, is entirely in the writer's dense, idiomatic Venetian.

⁸ Alfredo Stussi, ed., *Zibaldone da Canal* (Venice, 1967).

⁹ Francesca Gambino, ed., *I Vangeli in antico veneziano: ms Marciano it. 13* (4889) (Rome, 2007).

¹⁰ Rinaldo Fulin, et al., eds., *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 58 vols (Venice, 1879–1902).

¹¹ Anna Laura Lepschy, “The Language of Sanudo's *Diarii*,” in David Chambers, Cecil Clough and Michael Mallett, eds., *War, Culture and Society in Renaissance Venice* (London, 1993), pp. 199–212.

¹² Christiane Neerfeld, “*Historia per forma di diaria*.” *La cronachistica veneziana contemporanea a cavallo tra il Quattro e il Cinquecento* (Venice, 2006).

¹³ See Marcantonio Michiel, *Notizie d'opere del disegno*, ed. Theodor Frimmel (1896; Florence, 2000); Lorenzo Lotto, *Il libro di spese diverse*, ed. Pietro Zampetti (Venice, 1969); and Anna Pallucchini, ed., *Marco Boschini: “La carta del navegar pitoresco”* (Venice, 1966).

¹⁴ Francesco Zorzi Muazzo, *Raccolta de' proverbii, detti, sentenze, parole e frasi veneziane*, ed. Franco Crevatin (Vicenza, 2008).

More broadly, the linguistic traces left by the contact and interaction of cultures are an invaluable tool for historians. Our understanding of how the lagoons of Venice were populated and of the demographic dynamics that led to the formation and growth of Venice itself in the later medieval period, as outlined below in Section 4, are being enriched by such language archaeology. Our knowledge of the formation of Europe's oldest mercantile aristocracy is indissociable from a study of its linguistic manifestation in Venice's precocious and distinctive anthroponymy.¹⁵ The lasting genetic imprint of "colonial" Venetian on Trieste, Friuli, Istria, Dalmatia, and the Levant—and on the Veneto mainland itself—is unique among the Romance languages.¹⁶ The long-term impact of Venetian vocabulary on Greek, Albanian, Balkan Slavic, and Turkish—as well as its remodeling of the *scriptae* of Ragusa and Cyprus—are also an invaluable record of the modalities and timescale of the penetration of Venetian culture from 1400 to 1797, as well as before and after this period.¹⁷ Venice's position as the great medieval and Renaissance mediator, and as conveyor of goods, fashions and artistic styles, between the Islamic and Christian worlds is reflected in a corpus of key word exchanges in both directions. These are a vital historical resource for our understanding of Venice's roles and influence. Venetian civilization also generated home-grown terms that acquired an international circulation. Both influences can be illustrated by considering a selection of words, with earliest dates and provenance, which Venetian bequeathed to English in the period 1400–1797: Eng. artichoke [1531] ←Ven. *artichioco* "artichoke" from Arabic *al haršūf* "artichoke." Eng. arsenal [1506] ←Ven. *arsenal* (EV *arsenà*) from Arabic *dār as-sinā'a* "house of work/skills, factory." Eng. ballot n. and vb [1549] ←Ven. *balota* "ball used in Venetian government elections; ballot."

¹⁵ Gianfranco Folena, "Gli antichi nomi di persona e la storia civile di Venezia," in Gianfranco Folena, *Culture e lingue nel Veneto medievale* (Padua, 1990), pp. 175–210.

¹⁶ On the concept of colonial Venetian, see Manlio Cortelazzo, "Il veneziano coloniale: documentazione e interpretazione," in Fabiana Fusco, Vincenzo Orioles, and Alice Parmeggiani eds., *Processi di convergenza e differenziazione nelle lingue dell'Europa medievale e moderna* (Udine, 2000), pp. 317–26. The fundamental study of Venetian in the Levant is Gianfranco Folena, "Introduzione al veneziano de là da mar," in Folena, *Culture e lingue nel Veneto medievale*, pp. 227–68. For case studies on the spread from Venice of home-grown or borrowed words, see Ronnie Ferguson: "Veneto *sélega* (AIS 488) e *sisila* (AIS 499), due etimi greci connessi?" *L'Italia Dialettale* 59 (1996–98), 299–311; "L'etimologia dell'adriatico *cocàl(e)/crocàl(e)*, 'gabbiano,'" *Ce Fastu?* 78 (2002), 7–22; and "Per la storia di *brufolo*," *Lingua Nostra* 65.3–4 (2004), 93–101.

¹⁷ Federico Vicario, "Note sulla diffusione del lessico veneziano nella penisola balcanica," in Fusco, Orioles, and Parmeggiani, *Processi di convergenza e differenziazione*, pp. 375–84.

Eng. casino [1789] ←Italianised version of Ven. *casin* “gaming house, private salon.” Eng. contraband [1529] ←Ven. *contrabando* “contraband, illegal or prohibited traffic, smuggled goods,” with *bando* meaning “official decree.” Eng. gazette [1605] ←Ven. *gazeta* “small Venetian coin first issued in the 16th century,” of unknown etymology. Possibly from the Venetian expression *gazeta de la novità* “a pennyworth of news” referring to the cost of the first European news-sheets, published in Venice in the 16th century. Eng. ghetto [1611] ←Ven. *g(h)eto* “enclosed Jewish quarter of Venice.” The Jews of Venice were first confined to a specific quarter in the *sestier* of Cannaregio in 1516. The district was so called from a foundry (*gheto*) once sited on this *insula* of the city. Eng. gondola [1549] ←Ven. *gondola*. Of uncertain origin, but possibly from Greek κώντορος “short-tailed craft.” Eng. lagoon [1612] ←Ven. *laguna* < LACUNAM “pool of (stagnant) water.” Eng. lotto [1778] ←Ven. *lo(t)to* “lotto, lottery” from Germanic **lot-* “destiny, fate.” Eng. quarantine [1609] ←Ven. *quarantena* ~ *quarantina* “40 day isolation period.” Eng. regatta [1652] ←Ven. *regata*, of uncertain etymology.¹⁸

Knowledge of Venetian and of its history also has a wider conceptual importance for historians inasmuch as language mediates reality and gives expression to mentalities. In so doing it forms complex webs of interaction with the society and culture that forge, and are forged by, it.¹⁹ The highly specific nature and evolution of the Venetian polity and its sense of identity between 1400 and 1797 are reflected, and can be fruitfully studied, in its language attitudes and practice. The following questions are of particular significance for present and future research: Venice’s indifference to language policy, with a conspicuous failure to define a *de iure* language for itself at any stage in its independent history; the city’s vernacular-Latin bilingualism in writing stretching into the 16th century; the subsequent negotiations between Venetian and Tuscan/Italian at the written then at the spoken levels, leading to an enduring writing-speaking “bilingualism”; and, finally, the gradual establishment in the modern period of a unique Venetian-Italian diglossia²⁰ involving, in recent decades, an alternating and mixing of the two varieties. These issues, too, are surveyed below.

¹⁸ The dates of earliest English attestations are from Charles Talbut Onions, ed., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1974).

¹⁹ See Alberto Varvaro, *Identità linguistiche e letterarie nell'Europa romanza* (Rome, 2004).

²⁰ At its most basic, “diglossia” refers to a bilingualism of unequals. It applies in situations where one of two spoken varieties has prestige and is appropriate in a wide range of domains, while the other is more restricted in its usage and generally has lower prestige. By and large, this describes the language-dialect situation in most of Italy. Contemporary

On the linguistic side there are two main reasons contributing to the relative neglect of Venetian by historians. The first is specific to the nature of Venetian as a historical entity. The second is more broadly attributable to the traditionally problematic relationship between linguistics and history.

Venice's disinclination to legally define its own vernacular and its consequent disinterest, until the 19th century, in codifying its contours in grammar books and dictionaries is undoubtedly part of the practical problem. This has been compounded by the fall from official grace of Venetian since 1797 and especially since Italian unification in 1866. No longer the spoken and partly written language of a city state, definitely not the official language of a modern nation state, Venetian now possesses none of the socio-political trappings of a "language," including standardization, a stable spelling system, legal protection, and educational promulgation. Relegated to the status of a "dialect,"²¹ Contemporary Venetian is constantly exposed to, and in everyday interaction with, Italian, its survival now largely down to the loyalty of the remaining 60,000 or so native speakers in the city.

The formation and development of linguistics as a discipline in the 19th and 20th centuries also helps to explain the conspicuous absence of the language dimension in Venetian historical studies. Nineteenth-century linguistics was historical in the sense that its central mission was to establish, using the comparative method, the relationships between languages over time in terms of their "genetic" and, later, typological connections. It was within this framework that the fundamental Indo-European language "family" model crystallized. The structures of, and relationships between, the major sub-groupings of Indo-European, notably Romance, Germanic, and Slavic, were teased out and documented in detail. However, the anxiety of historical linguists to establish their discipline as an autonomous science, in parallel to the natural sciences, led them to conceive of each language system as a self-sufficient organism evolving under pressures that were considered strictly internal. In this way the history of languages

Venice is a partial exception in that it is problematic to straightforwardly describe Venetian as having lower prestige.

²¹ In the pejorative sense of a substandard form of a national language, the term *dialect* has no place in scientific linguistics. Venetian, like the other so-called "dialects" of Italian, is in fact a dialect of Latin, descended from it through processes of language change. It can also be described geo-historically as a dialect of Italy. In its loaded sense, "dialect" reflects a socio-political value judgment linked to the formation of national languages and to the consequent downgrading of other varieties spoken on a national territory.

became progressively decoupled from the history of the communities speaking them. The prevailing metaphor of the time was the biological one, derived from Darwinism. It implicitly excluded speakers from the processes of language-change, which were deemed to be unconscious and largely unobservable in real time. Such tendencies were reinforced in the 20th century by the dominant paradigms of structural linguistics, initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), and generative linguistics, founded by Noam Chomsky (b. 1928). Both schools focused on the contemporary (“synchronic”) states of language, neglecting their historical (“diachronic”) dimension. They shunned the untidy reality of language change over time and the role of speakers, as individuals and communities, in effectuating language change. Historical linguistics itself compounded the problem. Under the influence of dominant ideologies of nationalism, it tended throughout the 20th century to strongly emphasize standardized languages, excluding from its conceptual parameters prestigious varieties such as Venetian which had never undergone the codifying and standardizing processes that characterize modern national languages.

The rapprochement between language and history was maintained by a few historical linguists such as Hugo Schuchardt (1842–1927). He investigated the effect that languages in contact have on each other, incorporating historical and sociological data. In their different ways, dialect geographers and linguistic atlas investigators also put language in social and historical context. However, the notion of language as a historical entity has only come to the fore with the rise of sociolinguistics. Given an initial impetus in the United States by the pioneering empirical studies of William Labov (b. 1927) and by the theoretical and practical work on languages in contact by Uriel Weinreich (1926–1967), sociolinguistic methodologies, embedding language in a social and cultural matrix, have come of age in recent decades.²² They are being increasingly applied to the textual study of past language strata in the work of historical sociolinguists. It is in this context that Venetian has become an object of intense interest in linguistics. The everyday language of Venice-city for a millennium, exerting a profound impact for centuries on its territories on the Italian mainland (*la terraferma*) and overseas (*de là da mar*), Venetian has come to be seen as the historically best-documented as well as the most culturally significant

²² On the history of 19th-century linguistics, see Anna Morpurgo Davies, *La linguistica dell'Ottocento* (Bologna, 1996). On the rise of sociolinguistics and on the contending schools of linguistics in 20th-century America, see John Joseph, *From Whitney to Chomsky. Essays in the History of American Linguistics* (Edinburgh, 2002).

unstandardized European language. As such, it is an invaluable resource to historians of Venice and of European civilization.

2. *Venice and Venetian: A Historical Overview*

The hegemonic role of Venetian as the spoken vernacular of Venice in all social contexts and for all social classes, between the rise of the *Civitas Venetiarum* and the fall of the *Stado Veneto* in 1797, is a given. That it was and remained the prestige language of oral communication in Venice's overseas and then mainland possessions between 1400 and 1797 is also beyond doubt.

Historically, the geographical spread and influence of Venetian, and its high status, went hand in hand with Venice's remarkable mercantile growth, maritime then territorial expansion, and consequent cultural prestige between A.D. c.900 and A.D. c.1500. By 1400, following an intense period of urbanization and expansion, Venice was a major power, with merchants and outposts from Egypt to the Black Sea. After 1100 it achieved dominance in the Adriatic and extensive influence in the eastern Mediterranean. Between 1200 and 1500 it acquired, partially or entirely, Istria, Dalmatia, Corfu, Zakynthos, Cephalonia, Methoni, Euboea, the Cyclades, Crete, Cyprus, and Constantinople.²³ Its vernacular overwhelmed the earlier native dialects, derived from Latin, along the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts and was, with French, the prestige Romance idiom throughout the Levant. From the early 15th century, Venice acquired a land empire that stretched across northern Italy from Istria and Friuli almost to Milan, and from the Dolomites to the Po. The modern impact and status of Venetian in the Veneto developed from that period until the present.

What was the status of Venetian in Venice during the period that extends from its emergence in written form, c.1200, until the 15th century, when the city's political and commercial power and prestige were at their height and *venexian* had achieved structural stability in writing? Venetian was unquestionably the spoken language in all contexts—from family and street to law court, debating chamber, and diplomacy—both within Venice and throughout its empire, and remained so until the fall of the Republic. Nevertheless, the affirmation of its written form in this period was both more hesitant and less complete. Until the 15th century Venetian

²³ See Frederic Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, 1973).

was *a*, rather than *the*, written language of the Venetian state. A considerable number of documents—legal, diplomatic, and even legislative—appeared, with increasing frequency over time, in Venetian. In the states of central Italy, especially Florence, the vernacular tended to emerge more precociously and more clearly demarcated from Latin. In Venice, the conservatism of the Venetian chancery and the clerical monopoly of notarial functions in the city until the 15th century meant that Latin persisted substantially until 1500 and even beyond. The writing-speech “bilingualism” later to characterize Venetian’s relationship with Italian was prefigured in the Venetian state bureaucracy in the 14th and 15th centuries: Latin tendentially for writing, Venetian for speech. Although quantitatively very much in the minority compared to Latin, by 1400 Venetian was appearing in a wide range of written contexts: not only in private wills, contracts, merchants’ correspondence, and mercantile handbooks, and in devotional, moralizing, and escapist literature, but also in serious historical works and even legislative documents. Indeed, in its higher prose registers it was achieving a stability and sophistication that gave every indication of being the prelude to codification and even, given Venice’s exceptionally enduring statehood, to standardization.

A number of obvious questions arise concerning the potential next steps in the linguistic affirmation of Venetian. Was it codified and standardized? Was it ever Venice’s fully fledged language of state? Could Venetian, the language of Italy’s richest and most powerful polity, have actually become the basis of Italian itself? The negative answer to all three questions requires some explanation. A number of general cumulative factors are worth bearing in mind. The first, as we noted, is that the vernacular achieved autonomy from Latin relatively late in Venice. Second, there is the lack of Venetian literary vitality in the late medieval period. This creative deficit does not have a single explanation. The pragmatic, commercial bent of the city could and has been invoked. Venice’s very unusual constitution and political and civic stability may have played a part, as may the absence of centralized court patronage. In addition, it appears that the vernacular, and literature in it, were viewed as essentially private matters by the *Signoria*, and as irrelevant to public policy.²⁴ Whatever the reasons, Venice did not generate between 1300 and 1500 a literary culture to compare with that of the more turbulent Republican communes of

²⁴ See Lorenzo Tomasin, *Il volgare e la legge. Storia linguistica del diritto veneziano (secoli XIII–XVIII)* (Padua, 2001), p. 108.

central Italy. Nor did it ever consciously affirm a vernacular language policy for herself. In other words, Venice did not punch its weight linguistically in the Italian Renaissance, and was unpreoccupied by this. From shortly after 1300, the Venetian state was, in fact, probably the most receptive in Italy to Florentine/Tuscan cultural and linguistic influence, mainly but not exclusively in literature, and particularly in verse.²⁵ So much so that by the late 15th and early 16th centuries uncontaminated high-register texts in Venetian were in rapid contraction or in greater or lesser symbiosis with Tuscan. The latter phenomenon is most strikingly manifest in the hybrid prose of Marin Sanudo. When, therefore, Venice opted *de facto* for the vernacular as its main written medium in the early Cinquecento, it adopted, although never legally, the fundamentally Florentine vernacular that was becoming Italy's prestige written lingua franca and which was increasingly disseminated by the printing industry of which Venice was the European hub.²⁶ This form of the vernacular was favored by an intellectual elite attracted to its prestige and familiarity, to its relative closeness to Latin and, doubtless, to its rather intermediate linguistic character within the myriad Romance varieties of the peninsula. Venetian had come close to being Venice's exclusive language of state. Had Venice prevailed against the European powers of the League of Cambrai between 1509 and 1515,²⁷ it is not impossible that Italy might have had a codified language based on contemporary Venetian chancery norms rather than on old Florentine literary usage.²⁸

The Italian written vernacular was grammatically codified early in the 16th century by Giovan Francesco Fortunio in his *Regole grammaticali della volgar lingua* (1516) and, most influentially, by the Venetian patrician, cardinal, and man of letters Pietro Bembo in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525). Based essentially on 14th-century Tuscan and conceived originally for use in poetry and literary prose, Bembo's conservative norm was lexically elaborated and extended in 1612 by the Accademia della Crusca in its *Vocabolario*, the first of Europe's great national vernacular dictionaries, and still forms the basis of the modern Italian written standard. One of its most wide-reaching effects was, virtually overnight, to relegate

²⁵ Antonio Medin, "La coltura toscana nel Veneto durante il Medioevo," *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto* 82 (1922–23), 83–154.

²⁶ Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470–1600* (Cambridge, 1994).

²⁷ Felix Gilbert, "Venice in the Crisis of the League of Cambrai," in John Hale, ed., *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 274–92.

²⁸ Giacomo Devoto, *Il linguaggio d'Italia* (Milan, 1984), pp. 271–72.

Venetian and all other vernaculars in Italy to the effective status of dialects, in the sense, initially, of being subordinate to a national norm and then, eventually, of being a corruption of it. The new norm, while not yet an institutionalized standard in all domains, would from that time forward be adopted for unmarked writing by the Italian elites and act as a “roofing” language:²⁹ a prestigious point of reference for all the vernaculars of Italy. Indeed, it was in the early Cinquecento that the term *italiano* began to be used by some writers to refer to Florentine or Tuscan. It was also in 16th-century Italy that the term *dialect* first made its appearance in modern European languages, although the strength of local vernacular traditions in Italy impeded its use there in the modern pejorative sense until considerably later.³⁰ It is significant that as late as the mid-18th century, against the background of Venice’s exceptionally mature statehood in the Italian and European context, Goldoni could deploy spoken Venetian and spoken Italian alongside one another in his theater on an equal footing, continuing to call them quite unpolemically “lingua Veneziana” and “lingua Toscana.”³¹

With the fall of the Republic in 1797, and the subsequent period of French and Austrian occupation, Venetian lost its official position entirely within Venice and its former empire (*l’Imperio Veneto*), although it continued as the unmarked³² spoken language of all social classes, at home and abroad. When Venice joined the kingdom of Italy in 1866 following a plebiscite, a long-standing “bilingualism,” where dialect occupied most spoken registers and Italian most written ones, was the rule throughout the peninsula, apart perhaps from Tuscany and Rome, and was more clear cut and solidly established in Venice than elsewhere. This linguistic divide was inevitably rendered problematic by incorporation into a centralizing nation-state.³³ From uncontroversial and almost imperceptible, Italian contact influence on dialects became dynamic and, potentially at least, ideological. In Venice, an official national standard, the mother tongue of next to nobody in the city but familiar to the social elite, was now in effect

²⁹ Modeled on German *Dachsprache*, a “roofing” language is a prestige variety that acts as a reference for “subordinate” varieties within its political or cultural orbit.

³⁰ On the appearance of the term *dialetto* in the Italian Renaissance, see Mario Alinei, “Dialetto: un concetto rinascimentale fiorentino,” *Quaderni di Semantica* 2 (1981), 147–73.

³¹ From Goldoni’s preface to *I Rusteghi* of 1762. Guido Davico Bonino, ed., *Carlo Goldoni: “I Rusteghi”* (Turin, 1970), p. 17.

³² That is “normal,” with no special or negative connotations.

³³ For a consideration of the Italian linguistic situation after Unification within its historical context see Tullio De Mauro, *Storia linguistica dell’Italia unita* (Bari, 1963).

in competition across the usage spectrum with a typologically close prestige local spoken norm, in a characteristic late-19th-century situation of political democratization, economic development, and centralized nation-building. As a written medium, Venetian was confined, as before, to genre literature, but even in the spoken domain it was now defined, and self-defined, as a dialect.³⁴ Throughout the country, Italian was encouraged and spread through schooling, the mass media, and national service. It was also diffused through internal and external migration, and subtly but powerfully by the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic processes involved in the desire for conformity and social betterment in a modern society. The extension of a writing-versus-speech “bilingualism” to bilingualism in speech itself inevitably involved the encroachment of Italian into formal then informal discourse even in Venice.

Venetian’s enduring prestige and increasing osmosis with Italian have shielded it from a survival linked solely to education and class. Its functional restriction has, therefore, been of a more complex order, with a subtler differentiation of what constitutes “high” and “low” registers. In spite of the partial retreat of *venexian* and increasing structural pressure on it from Italian, Venice displays in 2013 a highly idiosyncratic diglossia in which Venetian and regional Italian alternate or interpenetrate on a flexible continuum. It remains, as in the past, the least stigmatized of Italian dialects, with exceptional speaker loyalty crossing all social classes and age groups.³⁵ Despite the dramatic drop in the population of the city in recent decades, Venetian is a tenacious and characteristic presence in a city overwhelmed by mass tourism and beset by housing difficulties. In spite, too, of the inevitable presence and pressures of Italian in all official domains and in the media, *venexian* dominates everyday conversation among Venetians, except the youngest. Its presence is especially strong in the more peripheral districts, Cannaregio, Castello, and the Giudecca, but also in *le fod(e)re* (literally “the folds” < Germanic **fodr-* “sheath”), the more out-of-the-way parts of the *sestieri* (< Lat. *SEXTARII*) of San Polo, San Marco, Dorsoduro, and Santa Croce, less affected by the student and tourist presence.

³⁴ Revealing is the title of Giuseppe Boerio’s great dictionary of Venetian, first published in 1829: *Dizionario del Dialecto Veneziano* (Venice, 1829, 1865).

³⁵ Gabrielle Gamberini, “Mise en mots de la structure diglossique: le cas de Venise,” in Thierry Bulot, ed., *Langue urbaine et identité* (Paris 1999), pp. 71–125.

3. *Classifications of Venetian*

Chronological Classification

The chronological span of a language rarely falls into coherent periods with neat boundaries. The criteria for operating what are always partly arbitrary intersections in its continuum can be biased, more or less, toward “internal” factors (significant changes in its structures) or external, historical ones. Particularly problematic to divide into significant time-tranches is an uncoded and unstandardized variety such as Venetian, which has undergone significant contact-pressure over time from a contiguous standard language and whose origins, evolution, and present position have only lately been the object of comprehensive research. In such circumstances, history of the language and linguistic history must go hand in hand, structured by a periodization that is sensitive to sociolinguistic pressures. On this basis I adopt here, as I have elsewhere,³⁶ the following classification:

- Early Venetian [EV] c.1200–c.1500
- Middle Venetian [MidV] c.1500–c.1800
- Modern Venetian [ModV] c.1800–c.1950
- Contemporary Venetian [CV] c.1950–the present

Each of these boundaries marks a watershed where societal or cultural events with linguistic repercussions altered the status and/or structure of Venetian. Conventionally, 1200 represents the appearance of *venexian* in written texts. The quite fundamental processes which restructured Early Venetian in the 13th and 14th centuries (see Section 4, below) could, by linguistic criteria alone, have justified a demarcation between “Old Venetian” and EV at around 1350. Instead, I opted for c.1500 as the next division. This date stands for the moment when Tuscan was achieving consensus status among Italy’s elites and interfering with unmarked written Venetian of all registers. The grammatical codification of Tuscan → Italian that would introduce writing-speech “bilingualism” to Venice was also imminent at that point. The year 1800 coincides approximately with a fundamental political and linguistic turning point in the fortunes of Venice and Venetian, consolidated and accelerated half a century later by unification with Italy. It marks the end of Venetian political and institutional independence, the Napoleonic and Austrian interludes with the awakening of

³⁶ Ferguson, *A Linguistic History of Venice*, pp. 45–47.

Italian patriotism in the middle classes, and the removal of even spoken *venexian* from the official public sphere.³⁷

Typological Classification

In historical and linguistic terms, Venetian belongs to the Romance subgrouping of the Indo-European language family. As such, it is a sister language of the Romance varieties that are currently officially recognized national languages of state: Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, and Rumanian. Venetian is equally a sister language in typological terms of Romance varieties that have official recognition of various kinds, falling short of exclusive state prerogatives—notably Catalan in Spain, Romansch in Switzerland and Dolomitic Ladin in Italy—as well as of the Romance dialects of Italy and elsewhere that have no official status or protection. Once a quasi language of state, Venetian at present is an unstandardized and unofficial spoken Romance variety. In writing it is currently confined to genres such as local poetry and theater and to humorous, satirical, or alternative creative media such as cartoons. It also has visibility in Venetian street signs and the names of local outlets, as well as in the Veneto book market for traditional stories and sayings.

Structurally, Venetian is relatively close to modern standard Italian: relative, that is, to the exceptional dialectal diversity within Italy, where “dialects” can diverge further from each other than do national languages and where Milanese, for example, is further structurally from Italian than Italian is from Spanish. On key measures, Venetian is broadly intermediate between Italian and the Gallo-Italian dialects of northern Italy (Piedmontese, Ligurian, Lombard, Emilian-Romagnol). Vocally, Venetian (from EV to CV) is characterized by a seven vowel system: /a/, /e/, /ɛ/, /i/, /o/, /ɔ/, /u/, reduced to /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/ when the vowels are unstressed. Italian shares this system, although the distribution of the stressed mid vowels /e/ ~ /ɛ/ and /o/ ~ /ɔ/ is not always identical with that of Venetian. Like Italian, Venetian has never had either of the front rounded vowels /ø/ and /y/ that characterize Gallo-Italian dialect systems and French, as in French *feu* and *lune*. Nor does it have the weak central schwa vowel /ə/. As in Italian, there is a strong tendency in Venetian not to drop (“apocope”)

³⁷ On the Venetian political, cultural and linguistic context in the 19th century see Manlio Cortelazzo, “I dialetti e la dialettologia nell'Ottocento,” in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi, eds., *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols (Vicenza, 1976–86), vol. 6 (1986): *Dall'età napoleonica alla prima guerra mondiale*, pp. 343–63.

weak internal vowels, e.g., Ven. *ospeal* ~ Ital. *ospedale* vs Romagnol *sbdel* < HOSPITALEM “hospital”; Ven. *domenega* ~ Ital. *domenica* vs Romagnol *dmendg* < DOMINICA (DIES) “Sunday.” With a few exceptions, all Italian words end in a vowel. Apart from those with final /a/, Gallo-Italian words tend to end in a consonant. Venetian leans towards Italian in this respect. However, on singular nouns and adjectives it deletes final /e/ and /o/ after /n/ and /l/ on original paroxytones (words stressed on the penultimate syllable), but not on derivatives of original geminates, e.g., *pan* < PANEM “bread,” *san* < SANUM “healthy,” *man* < MANUS “hand” vs *ano* < ANNUM “year”; *canal* < CANALEM “canal” vs *calle* < CALLEM “street”; *frutarol* < FRUCTAREOLUM “fruiterer” vs *cavalo* < CABALLUM “horse.” Final /e/ is also deleted after /r/, but again not on geminate reflexes, e.g., *cuor* < COREM “heart” vs *tore* < TURREM “tower.” Final /o/ is, however, retained after /r/ at all times, e.g., *duro* < DURUM “hard” and *caro* < CARUM “dear.”

Italian largely preserves originally unvoiced intervocalic consonants (those placed between two vowels in Latin). Venetian, like Gallo-Italian, voices these or removes them altogether, e.g., Ven. *amigo* vs Ital. *amico* < AMICUM “friend”; Ven. *fogo* vs Ital. *fuoco* < FOCUM “fire”; Ven. *saor* vs Ital. *sapore* < SAPOREM “flavor”; Ven. *mario* vs Ital. *marito* < MARITUM “husband.” Similarly, where Italian retains Latin double consonants and has even generated new geminates because of its prosodic accent, Venetian and Gallo-Italian have no double consonants at all, e.g., Ven. *anelo* vs Ital. *anello* < ANELLUM “ring”; Ven. *fiamma* vs Ital. *fiamma* < FLAMMAM “flame”; Ven. *femena* vs Ital. *femmina* < FEMINAM “female.”

Patterns of consonantal palatalization in Venetian parallel those of Italian but with predictably different outcomes. Among the most common divergences are the reflexes of Latin C or G (originally pronounced /k/ and /g/ in all contexts) when followed by the front vowels /i/ or /e/. Typical outcomes contrast as follows: Ven. *çera* vs Ital. *cera* < CERAM “wax”; Ven. *çervelo* vs Ital. *cervello* < CEREBELLUM “brain”; Ven. *zeneral* vs Ital. *generale* < GENERALEM “general.” The Venetian graphemes <ç> and <z> represented the affricate sounds /ts/ and /dz/ respectively in EV and, in part, in MidV. Towards the end of the latter period and in ModV and CV, the affricates have been replaced by the sibilants /s/ and /z/ respectively. Some of the Venetian palatal differences can be seen in the proper names of famous Venetian artists such as Zuan Bel(l)in (Ital. Giovanni Bellini), Vet(t)or Scarpazza (Ital. Vittore Carpaccio), and Zorzon da Castelfranco (Ital. Giorgione).

Among the most characteristic features of Venetian morphosyntax (grammar) are the identical third persons singular and plural on all verbs

and tenses, e.g., *el va ~ i va* “he/they go(es),” *el parlava ~ i parlava* “he/they were speaking.” Very striking, too, are Venetian inverted interrogative forms with the subject pronoun post-positioned, e.g., *vustu* (“do you want?”), *sastu* (“do you know?”), *gastu* (“do you have?”). Nowadays such inversion is confined to the familiar *tu* form and to selected verbs in the present; formerly it applied to all verbs, tenses, and persons. Venetian subject-pronoun patterns are distinctive and contrast with Italian, as can be seen on the present tense of the verb *magnar* “to eat,” with bracketed pronoun forms only used for emphasis: 1. *(mi) magno*, 2. *(ti) ti magni*, 3. *(lu) el magna*, *(ela) la magna*, 4. *(noialtri) magnemo* [MidV *(nu) magnemo*], 5. *(voialtri) magné* [MidV *(vu) magné*], 6. *(lori) i magna*, *(lore) le magna*. This contrasts with the simpler Italian system, which has no obligatory subject pronouns and where there is no separate feminine plural form. On some second-conjugation verbs, Venetian has a unique past-participle ending in *-esto*, e.g., Ven. *volesto* vs Ital. *voluto* “wanted”; Ven. *podesto* vs Ital. *potuto* “was able”; Ven. *piovesto* vs Ital. *piovuto* “rained.”

Venetian structures changed little between 1400 and 1797, and indeed into ModV. In phonology the affirmation of sibilants over affricates, mentioned above, was the most notable development. From Boerio's remarks³⁸ we can deduce that sibilant innovation was a class variant, present in speech in our period but not recorded. Similarly, the so-called *l evanescente*,³⁹ found only in Venetian and omnipresent in ModV and CV, must have been present, although unrecorded, toward the latter end of the MidV period. Grammatically, the most remarkable feature of MidV is the affirmation of *xe* “he/she/it is” for the third persons singular and plural of the verb *esser* “to be.” Initially, *xe* (also spelled *se* [← *si è* < SIC EST]) appeared in late EV as a variant of the *è* (< EST), which was the original morph and which still survives on the Veneto mainland. Notable, too, was the survival in MidV of two Venetian conditional forms in *-ia* and *-ave*, e.g., *vorìa ~ vorave* “I would like,” reduced in ModV and CV to *vorìa* (Ital. *vorrei*). The past historic tense was lost in MidV, replaced in all contexts by the present perfect.

³⁸ Boerio, *Dizionario*, pp. 11–12.

³⁹ In ModV and CV, initial or intervocalic /l/ is dropped before a front vowel; otherwise it is articulated as a lax spirant, e.g., *luna* [ˈuna] “moon,” *limon* [imɔŋ], “lemon,” *gondola* [ɡondoˈa], *calle* [kae] “street.”

4. *Origins to Affirmation:*

Venetian Language and Demographics up to 1500

The origins of Venetian, like those of Venice, are not obvious. The research challenge has been to understand conceptually, and find the tools to determine practically, how the birth of a new variety of lagoon speech, demarcated from the related speech varieties on the Veneto mainland, came about in the medieval period. These important linguistic-cum-historical issues, a crucial testing ground for the disciplinary synergy advocated in the first section of the present essay, have only very recently been tackled scientifically.⁴⁰ This has involved examining and comparing the earliest texts from Venice and from the Veneto *terraferma* against the background of the centuries-long migration patterns towards the lagoon in the medieval period. The aim has been to tease out the complex relationship between EV and the relevant mainland varieties that logically preceded it, in order to establish degrees of affiliation. In so doing this research has confronted the stubborn question of why the earliest Venetian texts are so disconcertingly lacking in homogeneity and why the kind of structural stability we might expect to find only materializes (and not in all texts) in the later Trecento and in the Quattrocento. Approaching the related questions of where Venice and Venetian come from, a nexus of facts, some historical and demographic, some linguistic, stand out. These interrelated and uncontroversial observations pointed in promising directions of research. The following are the main ones.

As is well known, Venice does not have a Roman past. It was, unusually for an Italian city, a latecomer both as a political entity (the *Ducatus Venetus*) and even more so as a substantial urban settlement. The lagoon was probably only modestly settled in Antiquity and in the early Middle Ages. Settlement began on a larger scale following the temporary, then more permanent, migrations in the wake of the so-called barbarian invasions, most importantly after the Longobard incursions of the late 6th century. Urbanization, though, came after the millennium.⁴¹ This timescale obviously implies that the emergence of Venetian as an autonomous

⁴⁰ Ronnie Ferguson, "Alle origini del veneziano: una koiné lagunare?" *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 121 (3) (2005), 476–509.

⁴¹ On the origins and settlement of Venice, see Antonio Carile and Giorgio Fedalto, *Le origini di Venezia* (Bologna, 1978); Giovanni Caniato, Eugenio Turri and Michele Zanetti, *La laguna di Venezia* (Venice, 1995); Roberto Cessi, *Origo civitatum Italiae seu Venetiarum* (Rome, 1933); and Cessi, *Venezia Ducale* (Venice, 1963). On the early Venetian chronicles, see Giovanni Monticcolo, ed., *Cronache veneziane antichissime* (Rome, 1890).

vernacular was chronologically very late compared to the historic Veneto varieties of the mainland. The latter evolved in a relatively untroubled line from Venetic settlement in the region starting around 800 BC. Venetic speech (a form of Indo-European rather closely related to Latin) was peacefully and gradually overlain by Latin from about the 2nd century B.C. Regional dialect divisions in the *Venetorum angulus* subsequently developed, partly conditioned by Celtic incursions to the west and north of the *decima regio Venetia et Histria*. The least affected parts of the region, preserving the most genuine Veneto speech-type, clustered in the areas of profoundest and untroubled Venetic settlement in the present provinces of Padua, Vicenza, and Rovigo. Overall, therefore, the historical heritage of the Veneto region presents the following picture: uninterrupted ethnic and linguistic tradition on the mainland, on the one hand, and late (and, as we shall see, mixed) settlement and a new dialect offshore, on the other.

The second observation regards the unusual, perhaps unique, way the peopling of the lagoon, followed by the urbanization of the central island nucleus around the Rivoalto, arose. The former was a gradual migration process, taking place over a number of centuries. Urbanization began slowly, at the start of the 11th century, increasing more rapidly in the 12th, when—around 1150—the city may have had some 25,000–30,000 inhabitants. Its population then took off explosively in the 13th century when, with around 100,000 inhabitants, Venice became a European metropolis.⁴² This is the city of the 70 *contrade* depicted in the 14th-century drawing in the Marciana attributed to Paolino da Venezia, where its physical morphology is essentially already that of the famous woodcut in the Museo Correr by Jacopo de' Barbari showing the city in 1500. By the time of Fra Paolino's map, not only was Venice's characteristic physical shape in place but also its language had, in parallel, settled into its stable, characteristic shape. To a linguist, these complex migration and urbanization processes

⁴² On this urbanization process see Jürgen Schulz, *Urbanism in Medieval Venice*, in Anthony Mohlo, Kurt Raaflaub, and Julia Emlen, eds., *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy* (Ann Arbor, 1991), pp. 419–45; Wladimiro Dorigo, *Venezia Romanica* (Venice, 2003); Andrea Castagnetti, "Insediamenti e popoli," in Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Storia di Venezia. Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, 14 vols (Rome, 1992–2002), vol. 1 (1992): *Origini–Età ducale*, ed. Lellia Cracco Ruggini, Massimiliano Pavan, Giorgio Cracco, and Gherardo Ortalli, pp. 577–612; Crouzet-Pavan, "La conquista e l'organizzazione dello spazio urbano," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2 (1995): *L'età del comune*, ed. Giorgio Cracco and Gherardo Ortalli, pp. 549–75; and David Jacoby, "La dimensione demografica e sociale," in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2: *L'età del comune*, ed. Cracco and Ortalli, pp. 681–711.

intuitively suggest that demography is likely to have had an impact, and perhaps a decisive one, on the configuration of the early Romance speech of the *Civitas Rivoalti* that evolved into the *Civitas Veneciarum* and finally into *Venexia*.

The third established fact is the provenance of the population streams that came to the Venice lagoon in the Middle Ages. Our knowledge of the currents of migration from the mainland Roman region of *Venetia et Histria* is based substantially on the medieval Venetian chronicle tradition. In spite of patriotic exaggeration and an over-emphasis on Venetian uniqueness, the tradition is essentially borne out by other historical and archaeological evidence. What is incontrovertibly clear is that the population of the lagoons came from the two areas of the future Veneto fronting the lagoon of Venice: the north-east and the centre-south. These areas take in the great ring of Venetic towns inherited by the Romans: Atria, Este, Patavium, Altinum, Tarvisium, Opitergium, Iulia Concordia, and Aquileia. A reading of the evidence suggests, *prima facie*, that the preponderant input may have come from the north-east. It follows inevitably that the late Latin/early Romance language varieties brought to the modestly or scantily populated Venice lagoon were of the north-eastern and central-southern Veneto types. Fortunately, these two varieties are both reasonably well attested in the written records from the 12th and 13th centuries onwards, so that we have solid points of comparison with which to evaluate the new lagoon Venetian when it is first attested in writing c.1200.

The fourth fact is linguistic. It is the striking structural variability, and multiplicity of linguistic forms, found in the earliest Venetian texts, both literary and non-literary.⁴³ The variability is much more extreme than in contemporaneous documents from other regions of Italy, including those from the Veneto mainland. Equally striking is the rapid structural stability that Venetian had achieved by the 15th century when it began its hegemonic expansion on to the Italian mainland. The records show radical variability in Venetian being gradually eliminated in the Trecento, so that by 1400 its contours had become largely settled.

The fifth point that strikes the linguist is that, from c.1400 to the present, some of the fundamental structures of Venetian are clearly classifiable as "intermediate." They appear to lie linguistically between what one would expect of a central-southern Veneto dialect, on the one hand, with

⁴³ This is the case even in thematically and stylistically homogeneous legal texts such as Alfredo Stussi, ed., *Testi veneziani del Duecento e dei primi del Trecento* (Pisa, 1965).

its more “Italian”-type structures, and a north-eastern Veneto dialect, on the other, with its Gallo-Italian features. Venetian after c.1400 seemed positioned between these two poles.⁴⁴

Lastly there is documented evidence from the Trecento onwards—that is, from the time of the settling of the EV norm—of the survival of some “nonstandard” structural forms in Venetian. These tend to appear in writings of less exalted register, such as personal letters and merchants’ correspondence. Later they show up in 16th-century Venetian dialect theater in the mouths of low-life characters. They are still evident in 18th-century theatrical texts by Goldoni and others. More significantly still, there is early evidence of the survival of actual nonstandard sub-varieties of Venetian in specific locations of the city itself. Marin Sanudo in 1500 tells us, for example, of the existence of what he calls a “Nicoloto” form of Venetian found in the western edge of the city in the fishing (and later working-class) areas of Santa Marta and San Nicolò dei Mendicoli.⁴⁵ Such remnants were still clear in Giovanni Papanti’s 19th-century linguistic survey of Venice,⁴⁶ and even nowadays elderly Venetians can recall areal differences surviving in the recent past. What is particularly interesting from our point of view is the location of these sub-varieties. Both early and late evidence locates their focal points on the north-eastern and south-western fringes of Venice in Santa Marta/San Nicolò dei Mendicoli/San Basegio and the Anzolo Rafael on the one hand (as Sanudo pointed out), and in Castello (San Martin and San Biagio) on the other. Can these differences be simply attributed to spontaneous developments in marginal, isolated poorer areas? Or were they, rather, tantalizing leftovers of the original demographic dynamics of the city from north-east and south-west?

Before my own investigations, the two comprehensive hypotheses proposed to take account of the above facts were the following: 1) Venetian is essentially descended directly from the north-eastern Veneto type, especially that from the eastern Treviso area, but with its most extreme features removed in the late medieval period by conscious influence from the

⁴⁴ On the intermediacy of Venetian between the two mainland Veneto types see Ronnie Ferguson, “The Formation of the Dialect of Venice,” in Anthony Lodge, ed., *Aspects of Linguistic Change*, special issue of *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 39.4 (2003), 454–55; and Hans Goebel, ‘La dialettometrizzazione integrale dell’AIS. Presentazione dei primi risultati,’ *Revue de Linguistique Romane* 72 (2008), 58–61.

⁴⁵ Angela Caracciolo Aricò, ed., *Marin Sanudo il Giovane: De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae* (Milan, 1980), p. 29.

⁴⁶ Giovanni Papanti, *I parlari italiani in Certaldo* (Livorno, 1875), p. 553.

educated classes of the city;⁴⁷ and 2) Venetian is a new mixed “koiné” dialect that evolved from intersecting linguistic currents deriving from the north-eastern and central-southern Veneto.⁴⁸ Neither of these theories had been tested systematically. In carrying out my investigation I employed models of koineization as they relate to the formation of new language varieties, on largely virgin territory, from the intermingling of populations speaking related, but not identical, dialects. The main processes predicated by the koineization model are, sequentially: the mixing of related feeder dialects on new territory, with initial high variability; face-to-face accommodation to each other of speakers, leading to leveling and restructuring of the initial variants in the mix; and the subsequent focusing of structural traits. The model goes on to predict that over several generations, relative structural stability is achieved. The resultant koiné shows selection of variant features from one or other of the original feeder-dialects; the presence of intermediate forms found in none of the original varieties; and a tendency to structural simplification. Re-allocated “rejected” forms from the initial mix may survive in geographical (“diatopic”) and class (“diastratic”) sub-dialects and may linger for a considerable time alongside the stable koiné norm.⁴⁹

My research methodology involved interrogating fine-grained detail from comparative corpora of EV and early mainland-Venetian texts. I isolated and contrasted, over a controlled time-span, a range of structural traits in both. In this way I was able to evaluate initial variability patterns and also to track in detail shifts from variability to stability in Venetian writing between c.1300 and c.1400. Finally, I sought and isolated reallocated residues in lower-register texts from Trecento to Cinquecento.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ This hypothesis was proposed by Giovan Battista Pellegrini, in “L’individualità storico-linguistica della regione Veneto,” in Giovan Battista Pellegrini, ed., *Studi di dialettologia e filologia veneta* (Pisa, 1977), pp. 11–31; and elsewhere.

⁴⁸ Suggested by Tuttle, particularly in Edward Tuttle, “Profilo linguistico del Veneto,” in Lorenzo Renzi and Michele Cortelazzo, eds., *La linguistica italiana fuori d’Italia* (Rome, 1997), pp. 125–59. The koiné hypothesis is also implicit in Alfredo Stussi, “La lingua,” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2: *L’età del comune*, ed. Cracco and Ortalli, pp. 783–801; and Žarko Muljačić, “Dal veneziano al veneto,” in Giuliano Staccioli and Irmgard Osols-Wehden, eds., “Come l’uomo s’eterna”: *Beiträge zur Literatur-, Sprach-, und Kunstgeschichte Italiens und der Romania* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 178–99.

⁴⁹ For the concrete application of the koineization methodology to other cases see Anthony Lodge, “Convergence and Divergence in the Development of the Paris Urban Vernacular,” *Sociolinguistica* 13 (1999), 51–68 (Parisian French); and Ralph Penny, *Variation and Change in Spanish* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁵⁰ Details of the comparative corpora and selected features are in Ferguson, *A Linguistic History of Venice*, pp. 177–86.

On the basis of the research-outcomes, it was possible to draw plausible conclusions about the origins and early development of Venetian. The results lent strong support to the hypothesis that Venetian arose as a koiné forged from north-eastern and central-southern Veneto mainland inputs. The evolution of EV from structural polymorphy to relative regularity over a period of centuries appeared as a paradigmatic example of combined demographic and linguistic inputs generating a long-term koineization dynamic. The data pointed to the classic koineization processes: interaction of related dialects; initial high-level variability followed by accommodation, leveling, and restructuring, leading to the formation of new, stable norms; and the reallocation of discarded features. The data also allowed the conclusion that of the two contributory streams to the new koiné, the greater influence was exerted by the north-eastern Veneto type.

Between 1400 and 1500, in the final phase of EV, the emerging Venetian written norm was attracted and influenced by two prestigious external models: the written *lingua franca* common in the chanceries of northern Italy,⁵¹ and Tuscan. By the early MidV period these influences had to some extent conditioned even spoken Venetian towards less extreme Veneto norms and towards more Italianizing ones—in line with the suggestion that some of the distinctive north-eastern Veneto elements within EV were removed “from above.” At the same time, the irresistible rise of Tuscan/Italian drastically curtailed the unmarked use of Venetian in writing. At the very moment when Latin was ceasing to be hegemonic, the codified language of the Italian elites eased *venexian* out of its position as the preferred written vernacular of the state of Venice.

5. *Venetian 1500–1797: From Language to Dialect*

A watershed moment in the status history of Venetian occurred around 1500, but in an unobtrusive, matter-of-fact way that singles Venice out in the European linguistic context. In a number of major western European states, the early 16th century saw the affirmation of national self-consciousness and, with it, national languages. This vernacular

⁵¹ Glauco Sanga, “La lingua lombarda: dalla koinè alto-italiana delle Origini alla lingua cortegiana,” in Sanga, ed., *Koinè in Italia dalle Origini al Cinquecento* (Bergamo, 1990), pp. 76–163.

foregrounding happened at the expense of Latin but also set in motion the process of functional dialectalization of other varieties spoken within national territories. Seen from both the historical and linguistic viewpoints, Venice appears unusual against the backdrop of these developments. The *Serenissima* was a state near the height of its power in 1500. It was a major European territorial player, with an overseas colonial empire, and would remain independent for another 300 years. And yet it never defined, or felt the need to define, a *de iure* national language of its own, in spite of having a written vernacular tradition going back more than three centuries.⁵² Language debate at the institutional level in this period only occurred sporadically, and when it did it was in very special circumstances which had to do with “progressive” versus “conservative” factions within the patriciate. In any case, it involved argument about the use of Latin or the vernacular, never about which vernacular to adopt.⁵³ The state refrained from legislating, or even pronouncing, on the nature of its vernacular (MidV *volgar* ~ *vulgar*, Ital. *volgare*). What we see is, in a sense, a continuation of the linguistic pragmatism, even lack of interest, that had already been visible throughout the EV period over the question of Latin or vernacular choice.

Venice’s peculiar indifference to language policy cannot, obviously, be divorced from the type of state that it was. Although immensely wealthy and influential, as well as being territorially far-flung, the *Stado Veneto* was conceptually a very different state from France, Spain, or England. They coalesced round national monarchies and territorial absorption, in the direction of that fundamental modern political entity the nation-state. Governed by a unique hereditary oligarchy that was never drawn from anywhere but the lagoon city itself, the great maritime Republic was to become, both mentally and constitutionally, an increasingly anachronistic polity on the European scene—although often comforted by foreign political thinkers in its projected self-image as a model of good government. Venice was a city-state whose patriotism was essentially municipal and

⁵² On the foregrounding, post-1400, of language as an identity marker alongside the religious and juridical identities dominant in the medieval period see Alberto Varvaro, “‘La tua loquela ti fa manifesto’: lingue e identità nella letteratura medievale,” in Varvaro, *Identità linguistiche*, pp. 227–41.

⁵³ Tomasin, *Il volgare e la legge*, pp. 123–24; Rembert Eufe, “Politica linguistica della Serenissima. Luca Tron, Antonio Condulmer, Marin Sanudo e il volgare nell’amministrazione veneziana a Creta,” *Philologie im Netz* 23 (2003), 15–43.

which felt no need to forge and impose a national language.⁵⁴ Apart from the post-1300 literary impact of Tuscan, what were the broader factors that tilted Venice's cultural and linguistic center of gravity towards Italian options? A number of interlinked historical and cultural factors may help to explain why the textual impact of Italian upon Venetian reached a critical mass soon after 1500, tipping trend into inevitability. Venice's gradual territorial contraction, its patriciate's progressive conversion from maritime to landed interests, the shift in the commercial centre of gravity from Mediterranean to Atlantic, the impact of Italian Humanism, and a printing industry favoring Tuscan—these factors combined meant that Venice came to align herself increasingly with Italian patrician mentalities.

After 1500, then, Venice *de facto* adopted, in legislation and in unmarked writing generally, the Tuscan-based vernacular which had become the written medium of choice of the dominant classes in Italy and which had already influenced written *venexian* in various ways in the Trecento and Quattrocento. However, it did so gradually and without fuss. Unmarked writing in Venice transited seamlessly from Venetian to Italian in the course of the 16th century, via a more-or-less Italianized Venetian, then a more-or-less Venetianized Italian. The absence of clean breaks in language in this period is characteristic of the Venetian attitude to cultural matters in general and to linguistic ones in particular. Not only was there never to be a language policy in the *Stado Veneto* but also Latin itself would linger on for centuries after 1500 in legislation and official writing. And while Venetian never became a fully fledged language, it was an exceptional dialect. The “bilingualism” that characterized Venetian from Renaissance to Enlightenment was only a writing-speaking dichotomy. In the oral domain, *venexian* reigned supreme from 1500 to 1797 in all social contexts and among and between all social classes.

The mainstream vernacular prose written by educated Venetians between 1500 and 1797 was invariably Italian and—as we noted—was meant to be so. This is true of the 16th-century dispatches to the *Signoria* of the Republic's ambassadors as it is of the city's pioneering 18th-century press, although most writing by Venetians revealed *venexian* intrusions to a greater or lesser degree. The different rates at which the transition from Venetian to Tuscan/Italian in educated written usage occurred

⁵⁴ For a lucid discussion of the historical trajectories of Venetian patriotism see Feliciano Benvenuti, “Venezia da patria a nazione: un percorso,” in Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, eds., *Venezia e l'Austria* (Venice, 1999), pp. 475–94.

can be tangibly appreciated by examining texts of various types in the MidV period. As a general rule, the higher the register the greater was the influence of Italian. In consciously high-register texts, the transition was usually complete by 1600, although some educated Venetians such as the poet Maffio Venier (1550–86), the art-critic Marco Boschini (1605–81), the playwright Carlo Goldoni (1707–93), and the patrician chronicler Francesco Zorzi Muazzo (1732–75) continued, at this time and beyond, to deliberately employ written Venetian. Artefacts such as the traditional painted and inscribed craft guild-boards (*insegne* < Lat. *INSIGNIAE*), now housed in the Museo Correr, remained strongly Venetian in character until the 18th century, even when they were periodically refurbished. This linguistic conservatism is also noticeable on some guild inscriptions on public buildings. Typical are the inscription, dated 1580, on the right-hand pillar of the shoemaker's guild-house in Campo San Tomà and the plaque of the German cobblers (*calegheri todeschi*), dated 1658, at Crosera no. 3128 at San Stefano. Similarly, the language of gondoliers' guild regulations continued to be markedly Venetian until the end of the Republic.⁵⁵ Public signs emanating from the authorities were more quickly Italianized, yet retained strong Venetian lexical elements. Characteristic is the plaque on the side of the church of San Stefano, dated 1632, prohibiting ball-games, trading, and swearing in the vicinity of the church: it consistently uses the Venetian term *biastema* "swear-word" (< Lat. *BLASTEMAM*, a variant of *BLASPHEMIAM*) and is dated *XX zugn.* (20 June), using Venetian *zugno* rather than Italian *giugno*. Among publications of a practical or materialistic nature, the use of Venetian remained strong throughout most of the period.

Indeed, far from being stigmatized in any way by the encroachment of written Italian, spoken Venetian paradoxically reached its apogee of external influence in the MidV period. This is the time of the expansion and consolidation of *venexian* in north-eastern Italy. The prestige spoken language of Venice became the pole of attraction for the upwardly mobile throughout the dominions of the Venetian state. *Venexian* radically restructured the urban dialects of the Veneto between 1500 and 1900, especially those of Padua, Vicenza, and Treviso. It formed the basis of the Common Veneto lingua franca that was constantly renewed from the mother-city and that survived into the 21st century. It Venetianized

⁵⁵ See the *Mariegola del traghetto del Ponte della Paggia* in the Archivio di Stato, Provveditori di Comun, B. 63.

the Lombard dialects of the contiguous Trentino region,⁵⁶ ousted Friulan from several major urban centers in Friuli, and probably erased the Ladin speech of Trieste.⁵⁷ The colonial dominions of Venice showed exceptional loyalty to the Republic and its speech, so that the “Italian” of the Istrian and Dalmatian coasts that flourished well into the 20th century was essentially Venetian.⁵⁸ This was also the time of the greatest diffusion of Venetian lexical items both within and outside Italy.

As a trading state, Venice was never concerned to impose its language. On the contrary, it was a significant language absorber in the medieval and Renaissance periods. It is no surprise that this multicultural international emporium, hosting colonies of Greek, Albanian, Ottoman, and German merchants (the latter housed in the Fontego dei Todeschi < Arabic *funduq* “merchant’s lodging-house”), forged the first European multilingual theater. Venetian Renaissance theater and comic literature abound in the realistic or caricatured depiction of mainland dialects and foreign languages that was to be the basis of the polyglot *commedia dell’arte*.⁵⁹

Although uncoded and never standardized, Venetian continued to evolve structurally in the MidV period towards informal spoken and written norms and indeed towards a convergence of the two. It divested itself of some of the most characteristic features of EV. It followed centuries-old and also new internal trajectories; it may have been subject to underground influence from its own hinterland and was constantly exposed to the roofing influence of Italian. While very cohesive as a dialect, with no rigid demarcations, Venetian also continued to show the diversity according to class, district and register that one would expect from a language in constant use at all societal levels in a city with complex social and neighborhood stratification. This rich configuration was evidence of the exceptional longevity and status that would guarantee the survival of Venetian into the 21st century.

⁵⁶ Giuseppe Bonfadini, “Il confine linguistico veneto-lombardo,” in Manlio Cortelazzo, ed., *Guida ai dialetti veneti*, vol. 5 (Padua, 1983), pp. 25–59.

⁵⁷ Mario Doria, *Storia del dialetto triestino* (Trieste, 1988).

⁵⁸ See Franco Crevatin, “Dialetti veneti dell’Istria,” in Manlio Cortelazzo, ed., *Guida ai dialetti veneti*, vol. 4, pp. 39–49 (for Istria); and Michael Metzeltin, “Venezianisch und Italienisch in Dalmatien,” in Günter Holtus, Michael Metzeltin, and Christian Schmitt, eds., *Lexikon der romanistischen Linguistik*, vol. 4 (Tübingen, 1988), pp. 551–69 (for Dalmatia).

⁵⁹ See Ronnie Ferguson, *The Theatre of Angelo Beolco (Ruzante): Text, Context and Performance* (Ravenna, 2000), pp. 121–61.

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APPENDIX ONE

Venetian Doges 1400–1797

Michele Steno (1400–1413)	Giovanni Bembo (1615–1618)
Tommaso Mocenigo (1414–1423)	Nicolò Donà (1618)
Francesco Foscari (1423–1457)	Antonio Priuli (1618–1623)
Pasquale Malipiero (1457–1462)	Francesco Contarini (1623–1624)
Cristoforo Moro (1462–1471)	Giovanni Corner I (1625–1629)
Nicolò Tron (1471–1473)	Nicolò Contarini (1630–1631)
Nicolò Marcello (1473–1474)	Francesco Erizzo (1631–1646)
Pietro Mocenigo (1474–1476)	Francesco Molin (1646–1655)
Andrea Vendramin (1476–1478)	Carlo Contarini (1655–1656)
Giovanni Mocenigo (1478–1485)	Francesco Corner (1656)
Marco Barbarigo (1485–1486)	Bertuccio Valier (1656)
Agostino Barbarigo (1486–1501)	Giovanni Pesaro (1658–1659)
Leonardo Loredan (1501–1521)	Domenico Contarini (1659–1675)
Antonio Grimani (1521–1523)	Niccolò Sagredo (1675–1676)
Andrea Gritti (1523–1538)	Alvise Contarini (1676–1684)
Pietro Lando (1539–1545)	Marcantonio Giustinian (1684–1688)
Francesco Donà (1545–1553)	Francesco Morosini (1688–1694)
Marcantonio Trevisan (1553–1554)	Silvestro Valier (1694–1700)
Francesco Venier (1554–1556)	Alvise Mocenigo II (1700–1709)
Lorenzo Priuli (1556–1559)	Giovanni Corner II (1709–1722)
Girolamo Priuli (1559–1567)	Alvise Mocenigo III (1722–1732)
Pietro Loredan (1567–1570)	Carlo Ruzzini (1732–1735)
Alvise Mocenigo I (1570–1577)	Alvise Pisani (1735–1741)
Sebastiano Venier (1577–1578)	Pietro Grimani (1741–1752)
Nicolò da Ponte (1578–1585)	Francesco Loredan (1752–1762)
Pasquale Cicogna (1585–1595)	Marco Foscarini (1762–1763)
Marino Grimani (1595–1605)	Alvise Mocenigo IV (1763–1778)
Leonardo Donà (1606–1612)	Paolo Renier (1779–1789)
Marcantonio Memmo (1612–1615)	Ludovico Manin (1789–1797)

APPENDIX TWO

Patriarchs of Grado 1400–1451

Pietro Cocco (1400–1406)	Biagio Molin (1427–1439)
Giovanni Zambotti (1406–1408)	Marco Condulmer (1439–1444)
Francesco Lando (1408–1409)	Domenico Michieli (1445–1451)
Leonardo Delfino (1409–1427)	

Patriarchs of Venice 1451–1800

Lorenzo Giustiniani (1451–1456)	Lorenzo Priuli (1590–1600)
Maffeo Contarini (1456–1460)	Matteo Zane (1600–1605)
Andrea Bondumier (1460–1464)	Francesco Vendramin (1605–1619)
Gregorio Correr (1464)	Giovanni Tiepolo (1619–1631)
Giovanni Barozzi (1465–1466)	Federico Corner (1631–1644)
Maffeo Girardi (1466–1492)	Gianfrancesco Morosini (1644–1678)
Tommaso Donà (1492–1504)	Alvise Sagredo (1678–1688)
Antonio Surian (1504–1508)	Giovanni Badoer (1688–1706)
Alvise Contarini (1508)	Pietro Barbarigo (1706–1725)
Antonio Contarini (1508–1524)	Marco Gradenigo (1725–1734)
Girolamo Querini (1524–1554)	Francesco Antonio Correr (1734–1741)
Francesco Contarini (1554–1555)	Ludovico Foscari (1741–1758)
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